

## Chapter 1 - The Melancholy Of Arjuna

Commentary by Sri Adi Sankaracharya, Translated by Swami Gambhirananda

### ***Dhrtarastra said:***

1.1 O Sanjaya, what did my sons (and others) and Pandu's sons (and others) actually do when, eager for battle, they assembled on the sacred field, the Kuruksetra (Field of the Kurus)?

### ***Sanjaya said:***

1.2 But then, seeing the army of the Pandavas in battle array, King Duryodhana approached the teacher (Drona) and uttered a speech:

1.3 O teacher, (please) see this vast army of the sons of Pandu, arrayed for battle by the son of Drupada, your intelligent disciple.

1.4 Here are the heroes wielding great bows, who in battle are compeers of Bhima and Arjuna: Yuyudhana (Satyaki) and Virata, and the maharatha (great chariot-rider) Drupada;

1.5 Dhrtaketu, Cekitana, and the valiant king of Kasi (Varanasi); Purujit and Kuntibhoja, and Saibya, the choicest among men;

1.6 And the chivalrous Yudhamanyu, and the valiant Uttamaujas; son of Subhadra (Abhimanyu) and the sons of Draupadi-all (of whom) are, verily, maharathas.

1.7 But, O best among the Brahmanas, please be appraised of those who are foremost among us, the commanders of my army. I speak of them to you by way of example.

1.8 (They are:) Your venerable self, Bhishma and Karna, and Krpa who is ever victorious in battle; Asvatthama, Vikarna, Saumadatti and Jayadratha.

1.9 There are many heroes who have dedicated their lives for my sake, who possess various kinds of weapons and missiles, (and) all of whom are skilled in battle.

1.10 Therefore, our army under the complete protection of Bhishma and others is unlimited. But this army of these (enemies), under the protection of Bhima and others is limited.

1.11 However, venerable sirs, all of you without exception, while occupying all the positions in the different directions as allotted (to you respectively), please fully protect Bhishma in particular.

1.12 The valiant grandfather, the eldest of the Kurus, loudly sounding a lion-roar, blew the conch to raise his (Duryodhana's) spirits.

1.13 Just immediately after that conchs and kettledrums, and tabors, trumpets and cow-horns blared forth. That sound became tumultuous.

1.14 Then, Madhava (Kṛṣṇa) and the son of Pandu (Arjuna), stationed in their magnificent chariot with white horses yoked to it, loudly blew their divine conchs.

1.15 Hṛṣīkeśa (Kṛṣṇa) (blew the conch) Pañcajanya; Dhanañjaya (Arjuna) (the conch) Devadatta; and Viratada (Bhīma) of terrible deeds blew the great conch Paundra;

1.16 King Yudhiṣṭhira, son of Kuntī, (blew) the Anantavijaya; Nakula and Sahadeva, the Sughoṣa and the Manipuṣpaka (respectively).

1.17 And the King of Kāśī, wielding a great bow, and the great chariot-rider Śikhaṇḍi, Dhr̥ṣṭadyumna and Virata, and Satyaki the unconquered;

1.18 Drupada and the sons of Draupadī, and the son of Subhadra, (Abhimanyu) the mighty-armed-all (of them) together, O king, blew their respective conchs.

1.19 That tremendous sound pierced the hearts of the sons of Dhṛtarāṣṭra as it reverberated through the sky and the earth.

1.20 O king, thereafter, seeing Dhṛtarāṣṭra's men standing in their positions, when all the weapons were ready for action, the son of Pandu (Arjuna) who had the insignia of Hanuman on his chariotflag, raising up his bow, said the following to Hṛṣīkeśa.

**Arjuna said:**

1.21 O Acyuta, please place my chariot between both the armies-.

1.22 -until I survey these who stand intent on fighting, and those who are going to engage in battle with me in this impending war.

1.23 These who have assembled here and want to accomplish in the war what is dear to the perverted son of Dhṛtarāṣṭra, I find them to be intent on fighting.

**Sanjaya said:**

1.24-25 O scion of the line of Bharata (Dhrtarastra), Hrsikesa, being told so by Gudakesa (Arjuna), placed the excellent chariot between the two armies, in front of Bhishma and Drona as also all the rulers of the earth, and said, 'O Partha (Arjuna), see these assembled people of the Kuru dynasty.'

1.26 Then Partha (Arjuna) saw, marshalled among both the armies, (his) uncles as also grandfathers, teachers, maternal uncles, brothers (and (cousins), sons, grandsons, as well as comrades and fathers-in-law and friends.

1.27 The son of Kunti (Arjuna), seeing all those relatives arrayed (there), became overwhelmed by supreme compassion and said this sorrowfully:

**Arjuna said:**

1.28 O Krsna, seeing these relatives and friends who have assembled here with the intention of fighting, my limbs become languid and my mouth becomes completely dry.

1.29 And there is trembling in my body, and there is horripilation; the Gandiva (bow) slips from the hand and even the skin burns intensely.

1.30 Moreover, O Kesava (Krsna), I am not able to stand firmly, and my mind seems to be whirling. And I notice the omens to be adverse.

1.31 Besides, I do not see any good (to be derived) from killing my own people in battle. O Krsna, I do not hanker after victory, nor even a kingdom nor pleasures.

1.32-34 O Govinda! What need do we have of a kingdom, or what (need) of enjoyments and livelihood? Those for whom kingdom, enjoyments and pleasures are desired by us, viz teachers, uncles, fathers-in-law, grandsons, brothers-in-law as also relatives-those very ones stand arrayed for battle risking their lives and wealth.

1.35 O Madhusudana, even if I am killed, I do not want to kill these even for the sake of a kingdom extending over the three worlds; what to speak of doing so for the earth!

1.36 O Janardana, what happiness shall we derive by killing the sons of Dhrtarastra? Sin alone will accrue to us by killing these felons.

1.37 Therefore, it is not proper for us to kill the sons of Dhrtarastra who are our own relatives. For, O Madhava, how can we be happy by killing our kinsmen?

1.38-39 O Janardana, although these people, whose hearts have become perverted by greed, do not see the evil arising from destroying the family and sin in hostility towards, friends, yet how can we who clearly see the evil arising from destroying the family remain unaware of (the need of) abstaining from this sin?

1.40 From the ruin of the family are totally destroyed the traditional rites and duties of the family. When rites and duties are destroyed, vice overpowers the entire family also.

1.41 O Krsna, when vice predominates, the women of the family become corrupt. O descendent of the Vrsnis, when women become corrupted, it results in the intermingling of castes.

1.42 And the intermingling in the family leads the ruiners of the family verily into hell. The forefathers of these fall down (into hell) because of being deprived of the offerings of rice-balls and water.

1.43 Due to these misdeeds of the ruiners of the family, which cause intermingling of castes, the traditional rites and duties of the castes and families become destroyed.

1.44 O Janardana, we have heard that living in hell becomes inevitable for those persons whose family duties get destroyed.

1.45 What a pity that we have resolved to commit a great sin by being eager to kill our own kith and kin, out of greed for the pleasures of a kingdom!

1.46 If, in this battle, the sons of Dhrtarastra armed with weapons kill me who am non-resistant and unarmed, that will be more beneficial to me.

***Sanjaya narrated:***

1.47 Having said so, Arjuna, with a mind afflicted with sorrow, sat down on the chariot in the midst of the battle, casting aside the bow along with the arrows.

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## Chapter 2 - The Path Of Knowledge

Commentary by Sri Adi Sankaracharya, Translated by Swami Gambhirananda

***Sanjaya said:***

2.1 To him who had been thus filled with pity, whose eyes were filled with tears and showed distress, and who was sorrowing, Madhusudana uttered these words:

***The Blessed Lord said:***

2.2 O Arjuna, in this perilous place, whence has come to you this impurity entertained by unenlightened persons, which does not lead to heaven and which brings infamy?

2.3 O Partha, yield not to unmanliness. This does not befit you. O scorcher of foes, arise, giving up the petty weakness of the heart.

***Arjuna said:***

2.4 O Madhusudana, O destroyer of enemies, how can I fight with arrows in battle against Bhishma and Drona who are worthy of adoration?

2.5 Rather than killing the noble-minded elders, it is better in this world to live even on alms. But by killing the elders we shall only be enjoying here the pleasures of wealth and desirable things drenched in blood.

2.6 We do not know this as well as to which is the better for us, (and) whether we shall win, or whether they shall conquer us. Those very sons of Dhrtarastra, by killing whom we do not wish to live, stand in confrontation.

2.7 With my nature overpowered by weak commiseration, with a mind bewildered about duty, I supplicate You. Tell me for certain that which is better; I am Your disciple. Instruct me who have taken refuge in You.

2.8 Because, I do not see that which can, even after acquiring on this earth a prosperous kingdom free from enemies and even sovereignty over the gods, remove my sorrow (which is) blasting the senses.

***Sanjaya said:***

2.9 Having spoken thus to Hrsikesa (Krsna), Gudakesa (Arjuna), the afflictor of foes, verily became silent, telling Govinda, 'I shall not fight.' fight.'

2.10 O descendant of Bharata, to him who was sorrowing between the two armies, Hrsikesa, mocking as it were, said these words:

And here, the text commencing from 'But seeing the army of the Pandavas' (1.2) and ending with '(he) verily became silent, telling Him (Govinda), "I shall not fight"' is to be explained as revealing the cause of the origin of the defect in the form of sorrow, delusion, etc. [Delusion means want of discrimination. Etc. stands for the secondary manifestations of sorrow and delusion, as also ignorance which is the root cause of all these.] which are the sources of the cycles of births and deaths of creatures.

Thus indeed, Ajuna's own sorrow and delusion, caused by the ideas of affection, parting, etc., originating from the erroneous belief, 'I belong to these; they belong to me', with regard to kingdom [See note under verse 8.-Tr.], elders, sons, comrades, well-wishers (1.26), kinsmen (1.37), relatives (1.34) and friends, have been shown by him with the words, 'How can I (fight)....in battle (against) Bhishma' (4), etc. It is verily because his discriminating insight was overwhelmed by sorrow and delusion that, even though he had become engaged in battle out of his own accord as a duty of the Ksatriyas, he desisted from that war and chose to undertake other's duties like living on alms etc. It is thus that in the case of all creatures whose minds come under the sway of the defects of sorrow, delusion, etc. there verily follows, as a matter of course, abandoning their own duties and resorting to prohibited ones. Even when they engage in their own duties their actions with speech, mind, body, etc., are certainly motivated by hankering for rewards, and are accompanied by egoism. [Egoism consists in thinking that one is the agent of some work and the enjoyer of its reward.]

Such being the case, the cycle of births and deaths-Characterized by passing through desirable and undesirable births, and meeting with happiness, sorrow, etc. [From virtuous deeds follow attainment of heaven and happiness. From unvirtuous, sinful deeds follow births as beasts and other lowly beings, and sorrow. From the performance of both virtuous and sinful deeds follows birth as a human being, with a mixture of happiness



and sorrow.] from the accumulation of virtue and vice, continues unendingly. Thus, sorrow and delusion are therefore the sources of the cycles of births and deaths. And their cessation comes from nothing other than the knowledge of the Self which is preceded by the renunciation of all duties. Hence, wishing to impart that (knowledge of the Self) for favouring the whole world, Lord Vasudeva, making Arjuna the medium, said, 'You grieve for those who are not to be grieved for,' etc.

As to that some (opponents) [According to A.G. the opponent is the Vrttikara who, in the opinion of A. Mahadeva Sastri, is none other than Bodhayana referred to in Sankaracarya's commentary on B.S. 1.1.11-19.-Tr.] say: Certainly, Liberation cannot be attained merely from continuance in the knowledge of the Self which is preceded by renunciation of all duties and is independent of any other factor. What then? The well-ascertained conclusion of the whole of the Gita is that Liberation is attained through Knowledge associated with rites and duties like Agnihotra etc. prescribed in the Vedas and the Smrtis. And as an indication of this point of view they quote (the verses): 'On the other hand, if you will not fight this righteous (battle)' (33); 'Your right is for action (rites and duties) alone' (47); 'Therefore you undertake action (rites and duties) itself' (4.15), etc. Even this objection should not be raised that Vedic rites and duties lead to sin since they involve injury etc.'

**Objection:** How?

**Opponent:** The duties of the Ksatriyas, characterized by war, do not lead to sin when undertaken as one's duty, even though they are extremely cruel since they involve violence against elders, brothers, sons and others. And from the Lord's declaration that when they are not performed, 'then, forsaking your own duty and fame, you will incur sin' (33), it stands out as

(His) clearly stated foregone conclusion that one's own duties prescribed in such texts as, '(One shall perform Agnihotra) as long as one lives' etc., and actions which involve cruelty to animals etc. are not sinful.

**Vedantin:** That is wrong because of the assertion of the distinction between firm adherence (nistha) to Knowledge and to action, which are based on two (different) convictions (buddhi).

The nature of the Self, the supreme Reality, determined by the Lord in the text beginning with 'Those who are not to be grieved for' (11) and running to the end of the verse, 'Even considering your own duty' (31), is called Sankhya. Sankhya-buddhi [Sankhya is that correct (samyak) knowledge of the Vedas which reveals (khyayate) the reality of the Self, the supreme Goal. The Reality under discussion, which is related to this sankhya by way of having been revealed by it, is Sankhya.] (Conviction about the Reality) is the conviction with regard to That (supreme Reality) arising from the ascertainment of the meaning of the context [Ascertainment....of the context, i.e., of the meaning of the verses starting from, 'Never is this One born, and never does It die,' etc. (20).]-that the Self is not an agent because of the absence in It of the six kinds of changes, viz birth etc. [Birth, continuance, growth, transformation, decay and death.] Sankhyas are those men of Knowledge to whom that (conviction) becomes natural. Prior to the rise of this Conviction (Sankhya-buddhi), the ascertained [Ast. and A.G. omit this word 'ascertainment, nirupana'-Tr.] of the performance of the disciplines leading to Liberation-which is based on a discrimination between virtue and vice, [And adoration of God]. and which presupposes the Self's difference from the body etc. and Its agentship and enjoyership-is called Yoga. The conviction with regard to that (Yoga) is Yoga -buddhi. The performers of rites and duties, for whom this (conviction) is appropriate, are called yogis.

Accordingly, the two distinct Convictions have been pointed out by the Lord in the verse, 'This wisdom (buddhi) has been imparted to you from the standpoint of Self-realization (Sankhya). But listen to this (wisdom) from the standpoint of (Karma-) Yoga' (39). And of these two, the Lord will separately speak, with reference to the Sankhyas, of the firm adherence to the Yoga of Knowledge. [Here Yoga and Knowledge are identical. Yoga is that through which one gets connected, identified. with Brahman.] which is based on Sankya-buddhi, in, 'Two kinds of adherences were spoken of by Me in the form of the Vedas, in the days of yore.' [This portion is ascending to G1.Pr. and A.A.; Ast. omits this and quotes exactly the first line of 3.3. By saying, 'in the form of the Vedas', the Lord indicates that the Vedas, which are really the knowledge inherent in God and issue out of Him, are identical with Himself.-Tr.] similarly, in, 'through the Yoga of Action for the yogis' (3.3), He will separately speak of the firm adherence to the Yoga [Here also Karma and Yoga are identical, and lead to Liberation by bringing about purity of heart which is followed by steadfastness in Knowledge.] of Karma which is based on Yoga-buddhi (Conviction about Yoga). Thus, the two kinds of steadfastness-that based on the conviction about the nature of the Self, and that based on the conviction about rites and duties-have been distinctly spoken of by the Lord Himslef, who saw that the coexistence of Knowledge and rites and duties is not possible in the same person, they being based on the convictions of non-agentship and agentship, unity and diversity (respectively).

As is this teaching about the distinction (of the two adherences), just so has it been revealed in the Satapatha Brahmana: 'Desiring this world (the Self) alone monks and Brahmanas renounce their homes' (cf. Br. 4.4.22). After thus enjoining renunciation of all rites and duties, it is said in continuation, 'What shall we acheive through childeren, we who have attained this Self,

this world (result).' [The earlier quotation implies an injunction (vidhi) for renunciation, and the second is an arthavada, or an emphasis on that injunction.

**Arthavada:** A sentence which usually recommends a vidhi, or precept, by stating the good arising from its proper observance, and the evils arising from its omission; and also by adducing historical instances in its support.-V.S.A] Again, there itself it is said that, before accepting a wife a man is in his natural state [The state of ignorance owing to non-realization of Reality. Such a person is a Brahmacarin, who goes to a teacher for studying the Vedas]. And (then) after his enquiries into rites and duties, [The Brahmacarin first studies the Vedas and then enquires into their meaning. Leaving his teacher's house after completing his course, he becomes a house holder.] 'he' for the attainment of the three worlds [This world, the world of manes and heaven.-Tr.] 'desired' (see Br. 1.4.17) as their means a son and the two kinds of wealth consists of rites and duties that lead to the world of manes, and the divine wealth of acquisition of vidya (meditation) which leads to heaven. In this way it is shown that rites and duties enjoined by the Vedas etc. are meant only for one who is unenlightened and is possessed of desire. And in the text, 'After renouncing they take to mendicancy' (see Br. 4.4.22), the injunction to renounce is only for one who desires the world that is the Self, and who is devoid of hankering (for anything else).

Now, if the intention of the Lord were the combination of Knowledge with Vedic rites and duties, then this utterance (of the Lord) (3.3) about the distinction would have been illogical. Nor would Arjuna's question, 'If it be Your opinion that wisdom (Knowledge) is superior to action (rites and duties)....,' etc. (3.1) be proper. If the Lord had not spoken earlier of the impossibility of the pursuit of Knowledge and rites and duties by the same person (at the same time), then how could Arjuna falsely impute to the Lord- by saying, 'If it be your opinion that wisdom is superior to action.....'-(of

having spoken) what was not heard by him, viz the higher status of Knowledge over rites and duties? Moreover, if it be that the combination of Knowledge with rites and duties was spoken of for all, then it stands enjoined, ipso facto, on Arjuna as well. Therefore, if instruction had been given for practising both, then how could the question about 'either of the two' arise as in, 'Tell me for certain one of these (action and renunciation) by which I may attain the highest Good' (3.2)? Indeed, when a physician tells a patient who has come for a cure of his biliousness that he should take things which are sweet and soothing, there can arise no such request as, 'Tell me which one of these two is to be taken as a means to cure biliousness!' Again, if it be imagined that Arjuna put the question because of his noncomprehension of the distinct meaning of what the Lord had said, even then the Lord ought to have answered in accordance with the question: 'The combination of Knowledge with rites and duties was spoken of by Me. Why are you confused thus?' On the other hand, it was not proper to have answered, 'Two kinds of steadfastness were spoken of by Me in the days of yore,' in a way that was inconsistent and at variance with the question.

Nor even do all the statements about distinction etc. become logical if it were intended that Knowledge was to be combined with rites and duties enjoined by the Smrtis only. Besides, the accusation in the sentence, 'Why then do you urge me to horrible action' (3.1) becomes illogical on the part of Arjuna who knew that fighting was a Ksatriya's natural duty enjoined by the Smrtis. Therefore, it is not possible for anyone to show that in the scripture called the Gita there is any combination, even in the least, of Knowledge of the Self with rites and duties enjoined by the Srutis or the Smrtis. But in the case of a man who had engaged himself in rites and duties because of ignorance and defects like the attachment, and then got his mind purified through sacrifices, charities or austerities (see Br. 4.4.22), there arises the knowledge about the supreme Reality—that all this is but One, and Brahman is not an agent (of any action). With regard to him, although there is a

cessation of rites and duties as also of the need for them, yet, what may, appear as his diligent continuance, just as before, in those rites and duties for setting an example before people-that is no action in which case it could have stood combined with Knowledge. Just as the actions of Lord Vasudeva, in the form of performance of the duty of a Ksatriya, do not get combined with Knowledge for the sake of achieving the human goal (Liberation), similar is the case with the man of Knowledge because of the absence of hankering for results and agentship. Indeed, a man who has realized the Truth does not think 'I am doing (this)' nor does he hanker after its result.

Again, as for instance, person hankering after such desirable things as heaven etc. may light up a fire for performing such rites as Agnihotra etc. which are the means to attain desirable things; [The Ast. reading is: Agnihotradi-karma-laksana-dharma-anusthanaya, for the performance of duties in the form of acts like Agnihotra etc.-Tr.] then, while he is still engaged in the performance of Agnihotra etc. as the means for the desirable things, the desire may get destroyed when the rite is half-done. He may nevertheless continue the performance of those very Agnihotra etc.; but those performance of those very Agnihotra etc.; but those Agnihotra etc. cannot be held to be for this personal gain.

Accordingly does the Lord also show in various places that, 'even while performing actions,' he does not act, 'he does not become tainted' (5.7). As for the texts, '...as was performed earlier by the ancient ones' (4.15), 'For Janaka and others strove to attain Liberation through action itself' (3.20), they are to be understood analytically.

**Objection:** How so?

**Vedantin:** As to that, if Janaka and others of old remained engaged in activity even though they were knowers of Reality, they did so for preventing people from going astray, while remaining established in realization verily through the knowledge that 'the organs rest (act) on the objects of the organs' (3.28). The idea is this that, though the occasion for renunciation of activity did arise, they remained established in realization along with actions; they did not give up their rites and duties.

On the other hand, if they were not knowers of Reality, then the explanation should be this; Through the discipline of dedicating rites and duties to God, Janaka and others remained established in perfection (samsiddhi) either in the form of purification of mind or rise of Knowledge. This very idea [The idea that rites and duties become the cause of Knowledge through the purification of the mind.] will be expressed by the Lord in, '(the yogis) undertake action for the purification of oneself (i.e. of the heart, or the mind)' (5.11). After having said, 'A human being achieves success by adoring Him through his own duties' [By performing one's own duty as enjoined by scriptures and dedicating their results to God, one's mind becomes purified. Then, through Gods grace one becomes fit for steadfastness in Knowledge. From that steadfastness follows Liberation. Therefore rites and duties do not directly lead to Liberation. (See Common. under 5.12) (18.46), He will again speak of the steadfastness in Knowledge of a person who has attained success, in the text, '(Understand.....from Me....that process by which) one who has achieved success attains Brahman' (18.50).

So, the definite conclusion in the Gita is that Liberation is attained only from the knowledge of Reality, and not from its combination with action. And by pointing out in the relevant contexts the (aforesaid) distinction, we shall show how this conclusion stands.

That being so, Lord Vasudeva found that for Arjuna, whose mind was thus confused about what ought to be done [The ast. and A.A., have an additional word-mithyajnanavatah, meaning 'who had false ignorance'.-Tr.] and who was sunk in a great ocean of sorrow, there could be no rescue other than through the knowledge of the Self. And desiring to rescue Arjuna from that, He said, '(You grieve for) those who are not to be grieved for,' etc. by way of introducing the knowledge of the Self. [In this Gita there are three distinct parts, each part consisting of six chapters. These three parts deal with the three words of the great Upanisadic saying, 'Tattvamasi, thou art That', with a view to finding out their real meanings. The first six chapters are concerned with the word tvam (thou); the following six chapters determine the meaning of the word tat (that); and the last six reveal the essential identity of tvam and tat. The disciplines necessary for realization this identity are stated in the relevant places.]

***The Blessed Lord said:***

**2.11** You grieve for those who are not to be grieved for; and you speak words of wisdom! The learned do not grieve for the departed and those who have not departed.



Bhisma, Drona and others are not to be grieved for, because they are of noble character and are eternal in their real nature. With regard to them, asocyan, who are not to be grieved for; tvam, you; anvasocah, grieve, (thinking) 'They die because of me; without them what shall I do with dominion and enjoyment?'; ca, and; bhasase, you speak; prajnavadan, words of wisdom, words used by men of wisdom, of intelligence. The idea is, 'Like one mad, you show in yourself this foolishness and learning which are contradictory.'

Because, panditah, the learned, the knowers of the Self-panda means wisdom about the Self; those indeed who have this are panditah, one the authority of the Upanisadic text, '....the knowers of Brahman, having known all about scholarship,....' (Br. 3.5.1) ['Therefore the knowers of Brahman, having known all about scholarship, should try to live upon that strength which comes of Knowledge; having known all about this strength as well as scholarship, he becomes meditative; having known all about both meditateness and its opposite, he becomes a knower of Brahman.']; na anusocanti, do not grieve for; gatasun, the departed, whose life has become extinct; agatasun ca, and for those who have not departed, whose life has not left, the living. The idea is, 'You are sorrowing for those who are eternal in the real sense, and who are not to be grieved for. Hence you are a fool!'

2.12 But certainly (it is) not (a fact) that I did not exist at any time; nor you, nor these rulers of men. And surely it is not that we all shall cease to exist after this.

Why are they not to be grieved for? Because they are eternal. How? Na tu eva, but certainly it is not (a fact); that jatu, at any time; aham, I ; na asam, did not exist; on the contrary, I did exist. The idea is that when the bodies were born or died in the past, I existed eternally. [Here Ast. adds ghatadisu viyadiva, like Space in pot etc.-Tr.] Similarly, na tvam, nor is it that you did not exist; but you surely existed. Ca, and so also; na ime, nor is it that these ; jana-adhipah, rulers of men, did not exist. On the other hand, they did exist. And similarly, na eva, it is surely not that; vayam, we; sarve, all; na bhavisyamah, shall cease to exist; atah param, after this, even after the destruction of this body. On the contrary, we shall exist. The meaning is that even in all the three times (past, present and future) we are eternal in our nature as the Self. The plural number (in we) is used following the diversity of the bodies, but not in the sense of the multiplicity of the Self.

2.13 As are boyhood, youth and decrepitude to an embodied being in this (present) body, similar is the acquisition of another body. This being so, an intelligent person does not get deluded.

As to that, to show how the Self is eternal, the Lord cites an illustration by saying, '...of the embodied,' etc. Yatha, as are, the manner in which; kaumaram, boyhood; yauvanam, youth, middle age; and jara, decrepitude, advance of age; dehinah, to an embodied being, to one who possesses a body (deha), to the Self possessing a body; asmin, in this, present; dehe, body-. These three states are mutually distinct. On these, when the first state gets destroyed the Self does not get destroyed; when the second state comes into being It is not born. What then? It is seen that the Self, which verily remains unchanged, acquires the second and third states. Tatha, similar, indeed; is Its, the unchanging Self's dehantarapraptih, acquisition of another body, a body different from the present one. This is the meaning. Tatra, this being so; dhira, an intelligent person; na, does not; muhyati, get deluded.

2.14 But the contacts of the organs with the objects are the producers of cold and heat, happiness and sorrow. They have a beginning and an end, (and) are transient. Bear them, O descendant of Bharata.

'In the case of a man who knows that the Self is eternal, although there is no possibility of delusion concerning the destruction of the Self, still delusion, as of ordinary people, caused by the experience of cold, heat, happiness and sorrow is noticed in him. Delusion arises from being deprived of happiness, and sorrow arises from contact with pain etc.' apprehending this kind of a talk from Arjuna, the Lord said, 'But the contacts of the organs,' etc.

Matra-sparsah, the contacts of the organs with objects; are sita-usna-sukha-duhkha-dah, producers of cold, heat, happiness and sorrow. Matrah means those by which are marked off (measured up) sounds etc., i.e. the organs of hearing etc. The sparsah, contacts, of the organs with sound etc. are matra-sparsah. Or, sparsah means those which are contacted, i.e. objects, viz sound etc. Matra-sparsah, the organs and objects, are the producers of cold, heat, happiness and sorrow.

Cold sometimes produces pleasure, and sometimes pain. Similarly the nature of heat, too, is unpredictable. On the other hand, happiness and sorrow have definite natures since they do not change. Hence they are mentioned separately from cold and heat. Since they, the organs, the contacts, etc., agamapayinah, have a beginning and an end, are by nature subject to origination and destruction; therefore, they are anityah, transient. Hence, titiksha, bear; tan, them-cold, heat, etc., i.e. do not be happy or sorry with regard to them.

2.15 O (Arjuna, who are) foremost among men, verily, the person whom these do not torment, the wise man to whom sorrow and happiness are the same-he is fit for Immortality.

What will happen to one who bears cold and heat? Listen: Verily, the person.....,etc.

(O Arjuna) hi, verily; yam purusam, the person whom; ete, these, cold and heat mentioned above; na, do not; vyathayanti, torment, do not perturb; dhiram, the wise man; sama-duhkha-sukham, to whom sorrow and happiness are the same, who is free from happiness and sorrow when subjected to pleasure and pain, because of his realization of the eternal Self; sah, he, who is established in the realization of the eternal Self, who forbears the opposites; kalpate, becomes fit; amrtattvaya, for Immortality, for the state of Immortality, i.e. for Liberation.

2.16 Of the unreal there is no being; the real has no nonexistence. But the nature of both these, indeed, has been realized by the seers of Truth.

Since 'the unreal has no being,' etc., for this reason also it is proper to bear cold, heat, etc. without becoming sorrowful or deluded. Asatah, of the unreal, of cold, heat, etc. together with their causes; na vidyate, there is no; bhavah, being, existence, reality; because heat, cold, etc. together with their causes are not substantially real when tested by means of proof. For they are changeful, and whatever is changeful is inconstant. As configurations like pot etc. are unreal since they are not perceived to be different from earth when tested by the eyes, so also are all changeful things unreal because they are not perceived to be different from their (material) causes, and also because they are not perceived before (their) origination and after destruction.

Objection: If it be that [Here Ast. has the additional words 'karyasya ghatadeh, the effect, viz pot etc. (and)'.-Tr.] such (material) causes as earth etc. as also their causes are unreal since they are not perceived differently from their causes, in that case, may it not be urged that owing to the nonexistence of those (causes) there will arise the contingency of everything becoming unreal [An entity cannot be said to be unreal merely because it is non-different from its cause. Were it to be asserted as being unreal, then the cause also should be unreal, because there is no entity which is not subject to the law of cause and effect.]?

Vedantin: No, for in all cases there is the experience of two awarenesses, viz the awareness of reality, and the awareness of unreality. [In all cases of perception two awarenesses are involved: one is invariable, and the other is variable. Since the variable is imagined on the invariable, therefore it is proved that there is something which is the substratum of all imagination, and which is neither a cause nor an effect.] That in relation to which the awareness does not change is real; that in relation to which it changes is unreal. Thus, since the distinction between the real and the unreal is dependent on awareness, therefore in all cases (of empirical experiences)

everyone has two kinds of awarenesses with regard to the same substratum: (As for instance, the experiences) 'The pot is real', 'The cloth is real', 'The elephant is real'-(which experiences) are not like (that of) 'A blue lotus'. [In the empirical experience, 'A blue lotus', there are two awarenesses concerned with two entities, viz the substance (lotus) and the quality (blueness). In the case of the experience, 'The pot is real', etc. the awarenesses are not concerned with substratum and qualities, but the awareness of pot, of cloth, etc. are superimposed on the awareness of 'reality', like that of 'water' in a mirage.] This is how it happens everywhere. [The coexistence of 'reality' and 'pot' etc. are valid only empirically-according to the non-dualists; whereas the coexistence of 'blueness' and 'lotus' is real according to the dualists.]

Of these two awareness, the awareness of pot etc. is inconstant; and thus has it been shown above. But the awareness of reality is not (inconstant). Therefore the object of the awareness of pot etc. is unreal because of inconstancy; but not so the object of the awareness of reality, because of its constancy.

Objection: If it be argued that, since the awareness of pot also changes when the pot is destroyed, therefore the awareness of the pot's reality is also changeful?

Vedantin: No, because in cloth etc. the awareness of reality is seen to persist. That awareness relates to the objective (and not to the noun 'pot'). For this reason also it is not destroyed. [This last sentence has been cited in the f.n. of A.A.-Tr.]

Objection: If it be argued that like the awareness of reality, the awareness of a pot also persists in other pots?

Vedantin: No, because that (awareness of pot) is not present in (the awareness of) a cloth etc.

Objection: May it not be that even the awareness of reality is not present in relation to a pot that has been destroyed?

Vedantin: No, because the noun is absent (there). Since the awareness of reality corresponds to the adjective (i.e. it is used adjectively), therefore, when the noun is missing there is no possibility of its (that awareness) being an adjective. So, to what should it relate? But, again, the awareness of reality (does not cease) with the absence of an object.. [Even when a pot is absent and the awareness of reality does not arise with regard to it, the awareness of reality persists in the region where the pot had existed.

Some read nanu in place of na tu ('But, again'). In that case, the first portion (No,.....since.....adjective. So,.....relate?) is a statement of the Vedantin, and the Objection starts from nanu punah sadbuddheh, etc. so, the next Objection will run thus: 'May it not be said that, when nouns like pot etc. are absent, the awareness of existence has no noun to qualify, and therefore it becomes impossible for it (the awareness of existence) to exist in the same substratum?'-Tr.]

Objection: May it not be said that, when nouns like pot etc. are absent, (the awareness of existence has no noun to qualify and therefore) it becomes impossible for it to exist in the same substratum? [The relationship of an adjective and a noun is seen between two real entities. Therefore, if the relationship between 'pot' and 'reality' be the same as between a noun and an adjective, then both of them will be real entities. So, the coexistence of reality with a non-pot does not stand to reason.]

Vedantin: No, because in such experiences as, 'This water exists', (which arises on seeing a mirage etc.) it is observed that there is a coexistence of two objects though one of them is non-existent.



Therefore, asatah, of the unreal, viz body etc. and the dualities (heat, cold, etc.), together with their causes; na vidyate, there is no; bhavah, being. And similarly, satah, of the real, of the Self; na vidyate, there is no; abhavah, nonexistence, because It is constant everywhere. This is what we have said.

Tu, but; antah, the nature, the conclusion (regarding the nature of the real and the unreal) that the Real is verily real, and the unreal is verily unreal; ubhayoh api, of both these indeed, of the Self and the non-Self, of the Real and the unreal, as explained above; drstah, has been realized thus; tattva-darsibhih, by the seers of Truth. Tat is a pronoun (Sarvanama, lit. name of all) which can be used with regard to all. And all is Brahman. And Its name is tat. The abstraction of tat is tattva, the true nature of Brahman. Those who are apt to realize this are tattva-darsinah, seers of Truth.

Therefore, you too, by adopting the vision of the men of realization and giving up sorrow and delusion, forbear the dualities, heat, cold, etc.-some of which are definite in their nature, and others inconstant-, mentally being convinced that this (phenomenal world) is changeful, verily unreal and appears falsely like water in a mirage. This is the idea.

What, again, is that reality which remains verily as the Real and surely for ever? This is being answered in, 'But know That', etc.

2.17 But know That to be indestructible by which all this is pervaded. None can bring about the destruction of this Immutable.

tu, But-this word is used for distinguishing (reality) from unreality; tat viddhi, know That; to be avinasi, indestructible, by nature not subject to destruction; what? (that) yena, by which, by which Brahman called Reality; sarvam, all; idam, this, the Universe together with space; is tatam, pervaded, as pot etc. are pervaded by space. Na kascit, none; arhati, can; kartum, bring about; vinasam, the destruction, disappearance, nonexistence; asya, of this avyayasya, of the Immutable, that which does not undergo growth and depletion. By Its very nature this Brahman called Reality does not suffer mutation, because, unlike bodies etc., It has no limbs; nor (does It suffer mutation) by (loss of something) belonging to It, because It has nothing that is Its own. Brahman surely does not suffer loss like Devadatta suffering from loss of wealth. Therefore no one can bring about the destruction of this immutable Brahman. No one, not even God Himself, can destroy his own Self, because the Self is Brahman. Besides, action with regard to one's Self is self-contradictory.

Which, again, is that 'unreal' that is said to change its own nature? This is being answered:

2.18 These destructible bodies are said to belong to the everlasting, indestructible, indeterminable, embodied One. Therefore, O descendant of Bharata, join the battle.

Ime, these; antavantah, destructible; dehah, bodies-as the idea of reality which continues with regard to water in a mirage, etc. gets eliminated when examined with the means of knowledge, and that is its end, so are these bodies and they have an end like bodies etc. in dream and magic;- uktah, are said, by discriminating people; to belong nityasya, to the everlasting; anasinah, the indestructible; aprameyasya, the indeterminable; sarirnah, embodied One, the Self. This is the meaning.

The two words 'everlasting' and 'indestructible' are not repetitive, because in common usage everlastingness and destructibility are of two kinds. As for instance, a body which is reduced to ashes and has disappeared is said to have been destroyed. (And) even while existing, when it becomes transfigured by being afflicted with diseases etc. it is said to be 'destroyed'. [Here the A.A. adds 'tatha dhana-nase-apyevam, similar is the case even with regard to loss of wealth.'-Tr.] That being so, by the two words 'everlasting' and 'indestructible' it is meant that It is not subject to both kinds of destruction. Otherwise, the everlastingness of the Self would be like that of the earth etc. Therefore, in order that this contingency may not arise, it is said, 'Of the everlasting, indestructible'.

Aprameyasya, of the indeterminable, means 'of that which cannot be determined by such means of knowledge as direct perception etc.'

**Objection:** Is it not that the Self is determined by the scriptures, and before that through direct perception etc.?

**Vedantin:** No, because the Self is self-evident. For, (only) when the Self stands predetermined as the knower, there is a search for a means of knowledge by the knower. Indeed, it is not that without first determining oneself as, 'I am such', one takes up the task of determining an object of knowledge. For what is called the 'self' does not remain unknown to anyone. But the scripture is the final authority [when the Vedic text establishes

Brahman as the innermost Self, all the distinctions such as knower, known and the means of knowledge become sublated. Thus it is reasonable that the Vedic text should be the final authority. Besides, its authority is derived from its being faultless in as much as it has not originated from any human being.]: By way of merely negating superimposition of qualities that do not belong to the Self, it attains authoritativeness with regard to the Self, but not by virtue of making some unknown thing known. There is an Upanisadic text in support of this: '....the Brahman that is immediate and direct, the Self that is within all' (Br. 3.4.1).

Since the Self is thus eternal and unchanging, *tasmat*, therefore; *yudhyasva*, you join the battle, i.e. do not desist from the war. Here there is no injunction to take up war as a duty, because be (Arjuna), though he was determined for war, remains silent as a result of being overpowered by sorrow and delusion. Therefore, all that is being done by the Lord is the removal of the obstruction to his duty. 'Therefore, join the battle' is only an approval, not an injunction.

The scripture Gita is intended for eradicating sorrow, delusion, etc. which are the cases of the cycle of births and deaths; it is not intended to enjoin action. As evidences of this idea the Lord cites two Vedic verses: [Ka. 1.2.19-20. There are slight verbal differences.-Tr.]

2.19 He who thinks of this One as the killer, and he who thinks of this One as the killed-both of them do not know. This One does not kill, nor is It killed.

But the ideas that you have, 'Bhisma and others are being killed by me in war; I am surely their killer'-this idea of yours is false. How? Yah, he who; vetti, thinks; of enam, this One, the embodied One under consideration; as hantaram, the killer, the agent of the act of killing; ca, and; yah, he who, the other who; manyate, thinks; of enam, this One; as hatam, the killed-(who thinks) 'When the body is killed, I am myself killed; I become the object of the act of killing'; ubhau tau, both of them; owing to non-discrimination, na, do not; vijanitah, know the Self which is the subject of the consciousness of 'I'. The meaning is: On the killing of the body, he who thinks of the Self (-the content of the consciousness of 'I'-) [The Ast. omits this phrase from the preceding sentence and includes it in this place. The A.A. has this phrase in both the places.-Tr.] as 'I am the killer', and he who thinks, 'I have been killed', both of them are ignorant of the nature of the Self. For, ayam, this Self; owing to its changelessness, na hanti, does not kill, does not become the agent of the act of killing; na hanyate, nor is It killed, i.e. It does not become the object (of the act of killing).

The second verse is to show how the Self is changeless:

2.20 Never is this One born, and never does It die; nor is it that having come to exist, It will again cease to be. This One is birthless, eternal, undecaying, ancient; It is not killed when the body is killed.

Na kadacit, never; is ayam, this One; jayate, born i.e. the Self has no change in the form of being born-to which matter is subject-; va, and (-va is used in the sense of and); na mriyate, It never dies. By this is denied the final change in the form of destruction. The word (na) kadacit), never, is connected with the denial of all kinds of changes thus-never, is It born never does It die, and so on. Since ayam, this Self; bhutva, having come to exist, having experienced the process of origination; na, will not; bhuyah, again; abhavita, cease to be thereafter, therefore It does not die. For, in common parlance, that which ceases to exist after coming into being is said to die. From the use of the word va, nor, and na, it is understood that, unlike the body, this Self does not again come into existence after having been non-existent. Therefore It is not born. For, the words, 'It is born', are used with regard to something which comes into existence after having been non-existent. The Self is not like this. Therefore It is not born.

Since this is so, therefore It is ajah, birthless; and since It does not die, therefore It is nityah, eternal. Although all changes become negated by the denial of the first and the last kinds of changes, still changes occurring in the middle [For the six kinds of changes see note under verse 2.10.-Tr.] should be denied with their own respective terms by which they are implied. Therefore the text says sasvatah, undecaying,. so that all the changes, viz youth etc., which have not been mentioned may become negated. The change in the form of decay is denied by the word sasvata, that which lasts for ever. In Its own nature It does not decay because It is free from parts. And again, since it is without qualities, there is no degeneration owing to the decay of any quality. Change in the form of growth, which is opposed to decay, is also denied by the word puranah, ancient. A thing that grows by the addition of some parts is said to increase and is also said to be new. But this Self was fresh even in the past due to Its partlessness. Thus It is puranah, i.e. It does not grow. So also, na hanyate, It is puranah, i.e. It does

not grow. So also, na hanyate, It is not killed, It does not get transformed; even when sarire, the body; hanyamane, is killed, transformed. The verb 'to kill' has to be understood here in the sense of transformation, so that a tautology [This verse has already mentioned 'death' in the first line. If the verb han, to kill, is also taken in the sense of killing, then a tautology is unavoidable.-Tr.] may be avoided.

In this mantra the six kinds of transformations, the material changes seen in the world, are denied in the Self. The meaning of the sentence is that the Self is devoid of all kinds of changes. Since this is so, therefore 'both of them do not know'-this is how the present mantra is connected to the earlier mantra.

2.21 O Partha, he who knows this One as indestructible, eternal, birthless and undecaying, how and whom does that person kill, or whom does he cause to be killed! [This is not a question but only an emphatic denial.-Tr.]

In the mantra, 'He who thinks of this One as the killer,' having declared that (the Self) does not become the agent or the object of the act of killing, and then in the mantra, 'Never is this One born,' etc., having stated the reasons for (Its) changelessness, the Lord sums up the purport of what was declared above: He who knows this One as indestructible, etc.

Yah, he who; veda, knows-yah is to be thus connected with veda-; enam, this One, possessing the characteristics stated in the earlier mantra; as avinasinam, indestructible, devoid of the final change of state; nityam, eternal, devoid of transformation; ajam, birthless; and avyayam, undecaying; katham, how, in what way; (and kam, whom;) does sah, that man of realization; purusah, the person who is himself an authority [i.e. above all injunctions and prohibitions. See 18.16.17.-Tr.]; hanti, kill, undertake the act of killing; or how ghatayati, does he cause (others) to be killed, (how does he) instigate a killer! The intention is to deny both (the acts) by saying, 'In no way does he kill any one, nor does he cause anyone to be killed', because an interrogative sense is absurd (here). Since the implication of the reason [The reason for the denial of killing etc. is the changelessness of the Self, and this reason holds good with regard to all actions of the man of realization.-Tr.], viz the immutability of the Self, [The A.A. omits 'viz the immutability of the Self'.-Tr.] is common (with regard to all actions), therefore the negation of all kinds of actions in the case of a man of realization is what the Lord conveys as the only purport of this context. But the denial of (the act of) killing has been cited by way of an example.

**Objection:** By noticing what special reason for the impossibility of actions in the case of the man of realization does the Lord deny all actions (in his case) by saying, 'How can that person,' etc.?



**Vedantin:** Has not the immutability of the Self been already stated as the reason [Some readings omit this word.-Tr.] , the specific ground for the impossibility of all actions?

**Objection:** It is true that it has been stated; but that is not a specific ground, for the man of realization is different from the immutable Self. Indeed, may it not be argued that action does not become impossible for one who has known as unchanging stump of a tree?!

**Vedantin:** No, because of man of Knowledge is one with the Self.

Enlightenment does not belong to the aggregate of body and senses.

Therefore, as the last latervative, the knower is the Immutable and is the Self which is not a part of the aggregate. Thus, action being impossible for that man of Knowledge, the denial in, 'How can that person...', etc. is reasonable. As on account of the lack of knowledge of the distinction between the Self and the modifications of the intellect, the Self, though verily immutable, is imagined through ignorance to be the perceiver of objects like sound etc. presented by the intellect etc., in this very way, the Self, which in reality is immutable, is said to be the 'knower' because of Its association with the knowledge of the distinction between the Self and non-Self, which (knowledge) is a modification of the intellect [By buddhi-vrtti, modification of the intellect, is meant the transformation of the internal organ into the form of an extension upto an object, along with its past impressions, the senses concerned, etc., like the extension of the light of a lamp illuminating an object. Consciousness reflected on this transformation and remaining indistinguishable from that transformation revealing the object, is called objective knowledge. Thereby, due to ignorance, the Self is imagined to be the perceiver because of Its connection with the vrtti, modification. (-A.G.)

The process is elsewhere described as follows:

The vrtti goes out through the sense-organ concerned, like the flash of a torchlight, and along with it goes the reflection of Consciousness. Both of them envelop the object, a pot for instance. The vrtti destroys the ignorance about the pot; and the reflection of Consciousness, becoming unified with only that portion of it which has been delimited by the pot, reveals the pot.

In the case of knowledge of Brahman, it is admitted that the vrtti in the form, 'I am Brahman', does reach Brahman and destroys ignorance about Brahman, but it is not admitted that Brahman is revealed like a 'pot', for Brahman is self-effulgent.-Tr.] and is unreal by nature. From the statement that action is impossible for man of realization it is understood that the conclusion of the Lord is that, actions enjoined by the scriptures are prescribed for the unenlightened.

**Objection:** Is not enlightenment too enjoined for the ignorant? For, the injunction about enlightenment to one who has already achieved realization is useless, like grinding something that has already been ground! This being so, the distinction that rites and duties are enjoined for the unenlightened, and not for the enlightened one, does not stand to reason.

**Vedantin:** No. There can reasonable be a distinction between the existence or nonexistence of a thing to be performed. As after the knowledge of the meaning of the injunction for rites like Agnihotra etc. their performance becomes bligatory on the unenlightened one who thinks, 'Agnihotra etc. has to be performed by collecting various accessories; I am the agent, and this is my duty',-unlike this, nothing remains later on to be performed as a duty after knowing the meaning of the injunction about the nature of the Self from such texts as, 'Never is this One born,' etc. But apart from the rise of knowledge regarding the unity of the Self, his non-agency, etc., in the form, 'I am not the agent, I am not the enjoyer', etc., no other idea arises. Thus, this distinction can be maintained.

Again, for anyone who knows himself as, 'I am the agent', there will necessarily arise the idea, 'This is my duty.' In relation to that he becomes eligible. In this way duties are (enjoined) [Ast. adds 'sambhavanti, become possible'.-Tr.] for him. And according to the text, 'both of them do not know' (19), he is an unenlightened man. And the text, 'How can that person,' etc. concerns the enlightened person distinguished above, because of the negation of action (in this text).

Therefore, the enlightened person distinguished above, who has realized the immutable Self, and the seeker of Liberation are qualified only for renunciation of all rites and duties. Therefore, indeed, the Lord Narayana, making a distinction between the enlightened man of Knowledge and the unenlightened man of rites and duties, makes them take up the two kinds of adherences in the text, 'through the Yoga of Knowledge for the men of realization; through the Yoga of Action for the yogis' (3.3).

Similarly also, Vyasa said to his son, 'Now, there are these two paths,' etc. ['Now, there are these two paths on which the Vedas are based. They are thought of as the dharma characterized by engagement in duties, and that by renunciation of them' (Mbh. Sa. 241.6).-Tr.] So also (there is a Vedic text meaning): 'The path of rites and duties, indeed, is the earlier, and renunciation comes after that.' [Ast. says that this is not a quotation, but only gives the purport of Tai, Ar. 10.62.12.-Tr.] The Lord will show again and again this very division: 'The unenlightened man who is deluded by egoism thinks thus: "I am the doer"; but the one who is a knower of the facts (about the varieties of the gunas) thinks, "I do not act"' (cf. 3.27,28). So also there is the text, '(The embodied man of selfcontrol,) having given up all actions mentally, continues (happily in the town of nine gates)' (5.13) etc.

With regard to this some wiseacres say: In no person does arise the idea, 'I am the changeless, actionless Self, which is One and devoid of the six kinds of changes beginning with birth to which all things are subject', on the

occurrence of which (idea alone) can renunciation of all actions be enjoined. That is not correct, because it will lead to the needlessness of such scriptural instructions as, 'Never is this One born,' etc. (20). They should be asked: As on the authority of scriptural instructions there arises the knowledge of the existence of virtue and vice and the knowledge regarding an agent who gets associated with successive bodies, similarly, why should not there arise from the scriptures the knowledge of unchangeability, non-agentship, oneness, etc. of that very Self?

**Objection:** If it be said that this is due to Its being beyond the scope of any means (of knowledge)?

**Vedantin:** No, because the Sruti says, 'It is to be realized through the mind alone, (following the instruction of the teacher)' (Br. 4.4.19). The mind that is purified by the instructions of the scriptures and the teacher, control of the body and organs, etc. becomes the instrument for realizing the Self. Again, since there exist inference and scriptures for Its realization, it is mere bravado to say that Knowledge does not arise. And it has to be granted that when knowledge arises, it surely eliminates ignorance, its opposite. And that ignorance has been shown in, 'I am the killer', 'I am killed', and 'both of them do not know' (see 2.19). And here also it is shown that the idea of the Self being an agent, the object of an action, or an indirect agent, is the result of ignorance. Also, the Self being changeless, the fact that such agentship etc. are caused by ignorance is a common factor in all actions without exception, because only that agent who is subject to change instigates someone else who is different from himself and can be acted on, saying, 'Do this.'

Thus, with a view to pointing out the absence of fitness for rites and duties in the case of an enlightened person, the Lord [Ast, adds vasudeva after 'Lord'.-Tr.] says, 'He who knows this One as indestructible,' 'how can that person,' etc.-thereby denying this direct and indirect agentship of an

enlightened person in respect of all actions without exception. As regards the question, 'For what, again, is the man of enlightenment qualified?', the answer has already been given earlier in, 'through the Yoga of Knowledge for the men of realization' (3.3). Similarly, the Lord will also speak of renunciation of all actions in, 'having given up all actions mentally,' etc. (5.13).

**Objection:** May it not be argued that from the expression, 'mentally', (it follows that) oral and bodily actions are not to be renounced?

**Vedantin:** No, because of the categorical expression, 'all actions'.

**Objection:** May it not be argued that 'all actions' relates only to those of the mind?

**Vedantin:** No, because all oral and bodily actions are preceded by those of the mind, for those actions are impossible in the absence of mental activity.

**Objection:** May it not be said that one has to mentally renounce all other activities except the mental functions which are the causes of scriptural rites and duties performed through speech and body?

**Vedantin:** No, because it has been specifically expressed: 'without doing or causing (others) to do anything at all' (5.13).

**Objection:** May it not be that this renunciation of all actions, as stated by the Lord, is with regard to a dying man, not one living?

**Vedantin:** No, because (in that case) the specific statement, 'The embodied man....continues happily in the town of nine gates' (ibid.) will become illogical since it is not possible for a dead person, who neither acts nor makes others act, [The words 'akurvatah akarayatah, (of him) who neither acts nor makes others act', have been taken as a part of the Commentator's argument. But A.G. points out that they can also form a part of the next Objection. In that, case, the translation of the Objection will be this: Can it

not be that the construction of the sentence (under discussion) is-Neither doing nor making others do, he rest by depositing (sannyasya, by renouncing) in the body', but not 'he rests in the body by renouncing...?'] to rest in that body after renouncing all actions.

**Objection:** Can it not be that the construction of the sentence (under discussion) is, '(he rests) by depositing (sannyasya, by renouncing) in the body', (but) not 'he rests in the body by renouncing...?'

**Vedantin:** No, because everywhere it is categorically asserted that the Self is changeless. Besides, the action of 'resting' requires a location, whereas renunciation is independent of this. The word nyasa preceded by sam here means 'renunciation', not 'depositing'. Therefore, according to this Scripture, viz the Gita, the man of realization is eligible for renunciation, alone, not for rites and duties. This we shall show in the relevant texts later on in the cotext of the knowledge of the Self.

And now we shall speak of the matter on hand: As to that, the indestructibility [Indestructibility suggests unchangeability as well.] of the Self, has been postulated. What is it like? That is being said in, 'As after rejecting wornout clothes,' etc.

2.22 As after rejecting wornout clothes a man takes up other new ones, likewise after rejecting wornout bodies the embodied one unites with other new ones.

Yatha, as in the world; vihaya, after rejecting jirnani, wornout; vasamsi, clothes; narah, a man grhnati, takes up; aparani, other; navani, new ones; tatha, likewise, in that very manner; vihaya, after rejecting; jirnani, wornout; sarirani, bodies; dehi, the embodied one, the Self which is surely unchanging like the man (in the example); samyati, unites with; anyani, other; navani, new ones. This is meaning.

2.23 Weapons do not cut It, fire does not burn It, water does not moisten It, and air does not dry It.

Why does It verily remain unchanged? This is being answered in, 'Weapons do not cut It,' etc. Sastrani, weapons; na, do not; chindanti, cut; enam, It, the embodied one under discussion. It being partless, weapons like sword etc. do not cut off Its limbs. So also, even pavakah, fire; na dahati enam, does not burn, does not reduce It to ashes. Ca, and similarly; apah, water; na enam kledayanti, does not moisten It. For water has the power of disintegrating a substance that has parts, by the process of moistening it. That is not possible in the case of the partless Self. Similarly, air destroys an oil substance by drying up the oil. Even marutah, air; na sosayati, does not dry; (enam, It,) one's own Self. [Ast. reads 'enam tu atmanam, but this Self', in place of enam svatmanam.-Tr.]

2.24 It cannot be cut, It cannot be burnt, cannot be moistened, and surely cannot be dried up. It is eternal, omnipresent, stationary, unmoving and changeless.

Since this is so, therefore ayam, It; acchedyah, cannot be cut. Since the other elements which are the causes of destruction of one another are not capable of destroying this Self, therefore It is nityah, eternal. Being eternal, It is sarva-gatah, omnipresent. Being omnipresent, It is sthanuh, stationary, i.e. fixed like a stump. Being fixed, ayam, this Self; is acalah, unmoving. Therefore It is sanatanah, changeless, i.e. It is not produced from any cause, as a new thing.

It is not to be argued that 'these verses are repetitive since eternality and changelessness of the Self have been stated in a single verse itself, "Never is this One born, and never does It die," etc. (20). Whatever has been said there (in verse 19) about the Self does not go beyond the meaning of this verse. Something is repeated with those very words, and something ideologically.' Since the object, viz the Self, is inscrutable, therefore Lord Vasudeva raises the topic again and again, and explains that very object in other words so that, somehow, the unmanifest Self may come within the comprehension of the intellect of the transmigrating persons and bring about a cessation of their cycles of births and deaths.

2.25 It is said that This is unmanifest; This is inconceivable; This is unchangeable. Therefore, having known This thus, you ought not to grieve.



Moreover, ucyate, it is said that; ayam, This, the Self; is avyaktah, unmanifest, since, being beyond the ken of all the organs, It cannot be objectified. For this very reason, ayam, This; is acintyah, inconceivable. For anything that comes within the purview of the organs becomes the object of thought. But this Self is inconceivable because It is not an object of the organs. Hence, indeed, It is avikaryah, unchangeable. This Self does not change as milk does when mixed with curd, a curdling medium, etc. And It is changeless owing to partlessness, for it is not seen that any non-composite thing is changeful. Not being subject to transformation, It is said to be changeless. Tasmat, therefore; vidivata, having known; enam, this one, the Self; evam, thus, as described; na arhasi, you ought not; anusocitum, to grieve, thinking, 'I am the slayer of these; these are killed by me.'

2.26 On the other hand, if you think this One is born continually or dies constantly, even then, O mighty-armed one, you ought not to grieve thus.

This (verse), 'On the other hand,' etc., is uttered assuming that the Self is transient. Atha ca, on the other hand, if (-conveys the sense of assumption-); following ordinary experience, manyase, you think; enam, this One, the Self under discussion; is nityajatam, born continually, becomes born with the birth of each of the numerous bodies; va, or; nityam, constantly; mrtam, dies, along with the death of each of these (bodies); tatha api, even then, even if the Self be of that nature; tvam, you; maha-baho, O mighty-armed one; na arhasi, ought not; socitum, to grieve; evam, thus, since that which is subject to birth will die, and that which is subject to death will be born; these two are inevitable.

2.27 For death of anyone born is certain, and of the dead (re-) birth is a certainty. Therefore you ought not to grieve over an inevitable fact.

This being so, 'death of anyone born', etc. Hi, for; mrtyuh, death; jatasya, of anyone born; dhruvah, is certain; is without exception; ca, and mrtasya, of the dead; janmah, (re-) birth; is dhruvam, a certainly. Tasmat, therefore, this fact, viz birth and death, is inevitable. With regard to that (fact), apariharye, over an enevitable; arthe, fact; tvam, you; na arhasi, ought not; socitum, to grieve.

2.28 O descendant of Bharata, all beings remain unmanifest in the beginning;; they become manifest in the middle. After death they certainly become unmanifest. What lamentation can there be with regard to them?

It is not reasonable to grieve even for beings which are constituted by bodies and organs, since 'all beings remain unmanifest' etc. (Bharata, O descendant of Bharata;) bhutani, all beings, avyaktaduni, remain unmainfest in the beginning. Those beings, viz sons, friends, and others, constituted by bodies and organs, [Another reading is karya-karana-sanghata, aggregates formed by material elements acting as causes and effects.-Tr.] who before their origination have unmanifestedness (avyakta), invisibility, nonperception, as their beginning (adi) are avyaktaadini. Ca, and; after origination, before death, they become vyakta-madhyani, manifest in the middle. Again, they eva, certainly; become avyakta-nidhanani, unmanifest after death. Those which have unmanifestness (avyakta), invisibility, as their death (nidhana) are avyakta-nidhanani. The idea is that even after death they verily attain unmanifestedness. Accordingly has it been said: 'They emerged from invisibility, and have gone back to invisibility. They are not yours, nor are you theirs. What is this fruitless lamentation!' (Mbh. St. 2.13). Ka, what; paridevana, lamentation, or what prattle, can there be; tatra, with regard to them, i.e. with regard to beings which are objects of delusion, which are invisible, (become) visible, (and then) get destroyed!

2.29 Someone visualizes It as a wonder; and similarly indeed, someone else talks of It as a wonder; and someone else hears of It as a wonder. And some one else, indeed, does not realize It even after hearing about It.

'This Self under discussion is inscrutable. Why should I blame you alone regarding a thing that is a source of delusion to all!' How is this Self inscrutable? [It may be argued that the Self is the object of egoism. The answer is: Although the individualized Self is the object of egoism, the absolute Self is not.] This is being answered in, 'Someone visualizes It as a wonder,' etc.

Kascit, someone; pasyati, visualizes; enam, It, the Self; ascaryavat, as a wonder, as though It were a wonder-a wonder is something not seen before, something strange, something seen all on a sudden; what is comparable to that is ascarya-vat; ca, and; tatha, similarly; eva, indeed; kascit, someone; anyah, else; vadati, talks of It as a wonder. And someone else sroti, hears of It as a wonder. And someone, indeed, na, does not; veda, realize It; api, even; srutva, after hearing, seeing and speaking about It.

Or, (the meaning is) he who sees the Self is like a wonder. He who speaks of It and the who hears of It is indeed rare among many thousands. Therefore, the idea is that the Self is difficult to understand.

Now, in the course of concluding the topic under discussion, [viz the needlessness of sorrow and delusion, from the point of view of the nature of things.] He says, 'O descendant of Bharata, this embodied Self', etc.

2.30 O descendant of Bharata, this embodied Self existing in everyone's body can never be killed. Therefore you ought not to grieve for all (these) beings.

Because of being partless and eternal, ayam, this dehi, embodied Self; nityam avadhyah, can never be killed, under any condition. That being so, although existing sarvasya dehe, in all bodies, in trees etc., this One cannot be killed on account of Its being allpervasive. Since the indwelling One cannot be killed although the body of everyone of the living beings be killed, tasmāt, therefore; tvam, you; na arhasi, ought not; socitum, to grieve; for sarvani bhutani, all (these) beings, for Bhīma and others.

Here [i.e. in the earlier verse.] it has been said that, from the standpoint of the supreme Reality, there is no occasion for sorrow or delusion. (This is so) not merely from the standpoint of the supreme Reality, but-

2.31 Even considering your own duty you should not waver, since there is nothing else better for a Kṣatriya than a righteous battle.

Api, even; avekṣya, considering; svadharmam, your own duty, the duty of a Kṣatriya, viz battle-considering even that-; na arhasi, you ought not; vikampitum, to waver, to deviate from the natural duty of the Kṣatriya, i.e. from what is natural to yourself. And hi, since that battle is not devoid of righteousness, (but) is supremely righteous-it being conducive to virtue and meant for protection of subjects through conquest of the earth-; therefore, na vidyate, there is nothing; anyat, else; śreyah, better; kṣatriyasya, for a kṣatriya; than that dharmyat, righteous; yuddhat, battle.

2.32 O son of Partha, happy are the Kṣatriyas who come across this kind of a battle, which presents itself unsought for and which is an open gate to heaven.

Why, again, does that battle become a duty? This is being answered (as follows) [A specific rule is more authoritative than a general rule. Non-violence is a general rule enjoined by the scriptures, but the duty of fighting is a specific rule for a Ksatriya.]: Partha, O son of Prtha; are not those Ksatiryas sukhinah, happy [Happy in this world as also in the other.] who labhante, come across; a yuddham, battle; idrsam, of this kind; upapannam, which presents itself; yadrcchaya, unsought for; and which is an apavrtam, open; svarga-dvaram, gate to heaven? [Rites and duties like sacrifices etc. yield their results after the lapse of some time. But the Ksatriyas go to heaven immediately after dying in battle, because, unlike the minds of others, their minds remained fully engaged in their immediate duty.]

2.33 On the other hand, if you will not fight this righteous battle, then, forsaking your own duty and fame, you will incur sin.

Atha, on the other hand; cet, if; tvam, you; na karisyasi, will not fight; even imam, this; dharmyam, righteous; samgramam, battle, which has presented itself as a duty, which is not opposed to righteousness, and which is enjoined (by the scriptures); tatah, then, because of not undertaking that; hitva, forsaking; sva-dharmam, your own duty; ca, and; kritim, fame, earned from encountering Mahadeva (Lord Siva) and others; avapsyasi, you will incur; only papam, sin.

2.34 People also will speak of your unending infamy. And to an honoured person infamy is worse than death.

Not only will there be the giving up of your duty and fame, but bhutani, people; ca api, also; kathayisyanti, will speak; te, of your; avyayam, unending, perpetual; akrtim, infamy. Ca, and; sambhavitasya, to an honoured person, to a person honoured with such epithets as 'virtuous', 'heroic', etc.; akirtih, infamy; atiricyate, is worse than; maranat, death. The meaning is that, to an honoured person death is preferable to infamy.

2.35 The great chariot-riders will think of you as having desisted from the fight out of fear; and you will into disgrace before them to whom you had been estimable.

Moreover, maharathah, the great chariot-riders, Duryodhana and others; mamsyante, will think; tvam, of you; as uparatam, having desisted; ranat, from the fight; not out of compassion, but bhayat, out of fear of Karna and others; ca, and ; yasyasi laghavam, you will again fall into disgrace before them, before Duryodhana and others; yesam, to whom; tvam, you; bahumato bhutva, had been estimable as endowed with many qualities.

2.36 And your enemies will speak many indecent words while denigrating your might. What can be more painful than that?

Ca, and besieds; tava, your; ahitah, enemies; vadisyanti, will speak; bahun, many, various kinds of; avacya-vadan, indecent words, unutterable words; nindantah, while denigrating, scorning; tava, your; samarthyam, might earned from battles against Nivatakavaca and others. Therefore, kim nu, what can be; duhkhataam, more painful; tatah, than that, than the sorrow arising from being scorned? That is to say, there is no greater pain than it.

2.37 Either by being killed you will attain heaven, or by winning you will enjoy the earth. Therefore, O Arjuna, rise up with determination for fighting.

Again, by undertaking the fight with Karna and others, va, either; hatah, by being killed; prapsyasi, you will attain; svargam, heaven; or jitva, by winning over Karna and other heroes; bhoksyase, you will enjoy; mahim, the earth. The purport is that in either case you surely stand to gain. Since this is so, Kaunteya, O son of Kunti; tasmāt, therefore; uttistha, rise up; kṛta-niscayah, with determination; yuddhaya, for fighting, i.e. with the determination, 'I shall either defeat the enemies or shall die.'

2.38 Treating happiness and sorrow, gain and loss, and conquest and defeat with equanimity, then engage in battle. Thus you will not incur sin.

As regards that, listen to this advice for you then you are engaged in battle considering it to be your duty: Krtva, treating; sukha-duhkhe, happiness and sorrow; same, with equanimity, i.e. without having likes and dislikes; so also treating labha-alabhau, gain and loss; jaya-ajayau, conquest and defeat, as the same; tatah, then; yuddhaya yujyasva, engage in battle. Evam, thus by undertaking the fight; na avapsyasi, you will not incur; papam, sin. This advice is incidental. [The context here is that of the philosophy of the supreme Reality. If fighting is enjoined in that context, it will amount to accepting combination of Knowledge and actions. To avoid this contingency the Commentator says, 'incidental'. That is to say, although the context is of the supreme Reality, the advice to fight is incidental. It is not an injunction to combine Knowledge with actions, since fighting is here the natural duty of Arjuna as a Ksatriya.].

The generally accepted argument for the removal of sorrow and delusion has been stated in the verses beginning with, 'Even considering your own duty' (31), etc., but this has not been presented by accepting that as the real intention (of the Lord).

The real context here (in 2.12 etc.), however, is of the realization of the supreme Reality. Now, in order to show the distinction between the (two) topics dealt with in this scripture, the Lord concludes that topic which has been presented above (in 2.20 etc.), by saying, 'This (wisdom) has been imparted,' etc. For, if the distinction between the topics of the scripture be shown here, then the instruction relating to the two kinds of adherences- as stated later on in, 'through the Yoga of Knowledge for the men of realization; through the Yoga of Action for the yogis' (3.3)-will proceed again smoothly, and the hearer also will easily comprehend it by keeping in view the distinction between the topics. Hence the Lord says:



2.39 O Partha, this wisdom has been imparted to you from the standpoint of Self-realization. But listen to this (wisdom) from the standpoint of Yoga, endowed with which wisdom you will get rid of the bondage of action.

Partha, O son of Prtha (Arjuna); esa, this; buddhih, wisdom, the Knowledge which directly removes the defect (viz ignorance) that is responsible for sorrow, delusion, etc. [Mundane existence consists of attraction and repulsion, agentship and enjoyership, etc. These are the defects, and they arise from ignorance about one's Self. Enlightenment is the independent and sole cause that removes this ignorance.] constituting mundane existence; abhihita, has been imparted; te, to you; sankhye, from the standpoint of Self-realization, with regard to the discriminating knowledge of the supreme Reality. Tu, but; srnu, listen; imam, to this wisdom which will be imparted presently; yoge, from the standpoint of Yoga, from the standpoint of the means of attaining it (Knowledge)-i.e., in the context of Karma-yoga, the performance of rites and duties with detachment after destroying the pairs of opposites, for the sake of adoring God, as also in the context of the practice of spiritual absorption.

As an inducement, He (the Lord) praises that wisdom: Yukta, endowed; yaya, with which; buddhya, wisdom concerning Yoga; O Partha, prahasyasi, you will get rid of; karma-bandham, the bondage of action-action is itself the bondage described as righteousness and unrighteousness; you will get rid of that bondage by the attainment of Knowledge through God's grace. This is the idea.

2.40 Here there is no waste of an attempt; nor is there (any) harm. Even a little of this righteousness saves (one) from great fear.

Moreover, iha, here, in the path to Liberation, viz the Yoga of Action (rites and duties); na, there is no; abhikrama-nasah, waste of an attempt, of a beginning, unlike as in agriculture etc. The meaning is that the result of any attempt in the case of Yoga is not uncertain. Besides, unlike as in medical care, na vidyate, nor is there, nor does there arises; any pratyavayah, harm. But, svalpam api, even a little; asya, of this; dharmasya, righteousness in the form of Yoga (of Action); when practised, trayate, saves (one); mahato bhayat, from great fear, of mundance existence characterized by death, birth, etc.

2.41 O scion of the Kuru dynasty, in this there is a single, one-pointed conviction. The thoughts of the irresolute ones have many branches indeed, and are innumerable.

Kuru-nandana, O scion of the Kuru dynasty; iha, is this path to Liberation; there is only eka, a single; vyavasayatmika, one-pointed; buddhih, conviction, which has been spoken of in the Yoga of Knowledge and which has the characteristics going to be spoken of in (Karma-) yoga. It is resolute by nature and annuls the numerous branches of the other opposite thoughts, since it originates from the right source of knowledge. [The right source of knowledge, viz the Vedic texts, which are above criticism.] Those again, which are the other buddhayah, thoughts; they are bahu-sakhah, possessed of numerous branches, i.e. possessed of numerous variations. Owing to the influence of their many branches the worldly state becomes endless, limitless, unceasing, ever-growing and extensive. [Endless, because it does not cease till the rix of full enlightenment; limitless, because the worldly state, which is an effect, springs from an unreal source.] But even the worldly state ceases with the cessation of the infinite branches of thoughts, under the influence of discriminating wisdom arising from the valid source of knowledge. (And those thoughts are) hi, indeed; anantah, innumerable under every branch. Whose thoughts? Avyavasayinam, of the irresolute ones, i.e. of those who are devoid of discriminating wisdom arising from the right source of knowledge.

2.42-43 O son of Prtha, those undiscerning people who utter this flowery talk-which promises birth as a result of rites and duties, and is full of various special rites meant for the attainment of enjoyment and affluence-, they remain engrossed in the utterances of the Vedas and declare that nothing else exists; their minds are full of desires and they have heaven as the goal.

Partha, O son of Prtha; those devoid of one-pointed conviction, who pravadanti, utter; imam, this; yam puspitam vacam, flowery talk, which is going to be stated, which is beautiful like a tree in bloom, pleasant to hear, and appears to be (meaningful) sentences [Sentences that can be called really meaningful are only those that reveal the self.-Tr.];-who are they? they are-avipascitah, people who are undiscerning, of poor intellect, i.e. non-discriminating; veda-vada-ratah, who remain engrossed in the utterances of the Vedas, in the Vedic sentences which reveal many panegyrics, fruits of action and their means; and vadinah, who declare, are apt to say; iti, that; na anyat, nothing else [God, Liberation, etc.]; asti, exists, apart from the rites and duties conducive to such results as attainment of heaven etc.

And they are kamatmanah, have their minds full of desires, i.e. they are swayed by desires, they are, by nature, full of desires; (and) svarga-parah, have heaven as the goal. Those who accept heaven (svarga) as the supreme (para) human goal, to whom heaven is the highest, are svarga-parah. They utter that speech (-this is supplied to construct the sentence-) which janma-karma-phala-pradam, promises birth as a result of rites and duties. The result (phala) of rites and duties (karma) is karma-phala. Birth (janma) itself is the karma-phala. That (speech) which promises this is janma-karma-phala-prada. (This speech) is kriya-visesa-bahulam, full of various special rites; bhoga-aisvarya-gatim-prati, for the attainment of enjoyment and affluence. Special (visesa) rites (kriya) are kriya-visesah. The speech that is full (bahula) of these, the speech by which that is full (bahula) of these, the speech by which these, viz objects such as heaven, animals and sons, are revealed plentifully, is kriya-visesa-bahula. Bhoga, enjoyment, and aishvarya, affluence, are bhoga-aisvarya. Their attainment (gati) is bhoga-aisvarya-gati. (They utter a speech) that is full of the specialized rites, prati, meant for that (attainment). The fools who utter that speech move in the cycle of transmigration. This is the idea.

2.43 One-pointed conviction does not become established in the minds of those who delight in enjoyment and affluence, and whose intellects are carried away by that (speech).

And vyavasayatmika, one-pointed; buddhih, conviction, with regard to Knowledge or Yoga; na vidhiyate, does not become established, i.e. does not arise; samadhaui, in the minds-the word samadhi being derived in the sense of that into which everything is gathered together for the enjoyment of a person-; bhoga-aisvarya-prasaktanam, of those who delight in enjoyment and wealth, of those who have the hankering that only enjoyment as also wealth is to be sought for, of those who identify themselves with these; and apahrta-cetasam, of those whose intellects are carried away, whose discriminating judgement becomes covered; taya, by that speech which is full of various special rites.

2.45 O Arjuna, the Vedas [Meaning only the portion dealing with rites and duties (karma-kanda).] have the three qualities as their object. You become free from worldliness, free from the pairs of duality, ever-poised in the quality of sattva, without (desire for) acquisition and protection, and self-collect.

To those who are thus devoid of discriminating wisdom, who indulge in pleasure, [Here Ast. adds 'yat phalam tad aha, what result accrues, that the Lord states: '-Tr.] O Arjuna, vedah, the Vedas; traigunya-visayah, have the three qualities as their object, have the three gunas, [Traigunya means the collection of the three qualities, viz sattva (purity), rajas (energy) and tamas (darkness); i.e. the collection of virtuous, vicious and mixed activities, as also their results. In this derivative sense traigunya means the worldly life.] i.e. the worldly life, as the object to be revealed. But you bhava, become; nistraigunyah, free from the three qualities, i.e. be free from desires. [There is a seeming conflict between the advices to be free from the three qualities and to be ever-poised in the quality of sattva. Hence, the Commentator takes the phrase nistraigunya to mean niskama, free from desires.] (Be) nirdvandvah, free from the pairs of duality-by the word dvandva, duality, are meant the conflicting pairs [Of heat and cold, etc.] which are the causes of happiness and sorrow; you become free from them. [From heat, cold, etc. That is, forbear them.]

You become nitya-sattvasthah, ever-poised in the quality of sattva; (and) so also niryoga-ksemah, without (desire for) acquisition and protection. Yoga means acquisition of what one has not, and ksema means the protection of what one has. For one who as 'acquisition and protection' foremost in his mind, it is difficult to seek Liberation. Hence, you be free from acquisition and protection. And also be atmavan, self-collected, vigilant. This is the advice given to you while you are engaged in your own duty. [And not from the point of view of seeking Liberation.]

2.46 A Brahmana with realization has that much utility in all the Vedas as a man has in a well when there is a flood all around.

If there be no need for the infinite results of all the rites and duties mentioned in the Vedas, then why should they be performed as a dedication to God? Listen to the answer being given:

In the world, yavan, whatever; arthah, utility, use, like bathing, drinking, etc.; one has udapane, in a well, pond and other numerous limited reservoirs; all that, indeed, is achieved, i.e. all those needs are fulfilled to that very extent; sampluhtodake, when there is a flood; sarvatah, all around. In a similar manner, whatever utility, result of action, there is sarvesu, in all; the vedesu, Vedas, i.e. in the rites and duties mentioned in the Vedas; all that utility is achieved, i.e. gets fulfilled; tavan, to that very extent; in that result of realization which comes brahmanasya, to a Brahmana, a sannyasin; vijanatah, who knows the Reality that is the supreme Goal-that result being comparable to the flood all around. For there is the Upanisadic text, '...so all virtuous deeds performed by people get included in this one...who knows what he (Raikva) knows....' (Ch. 4.1.4). The Lord also will say, 'all actions in their totality culminate in Knowledge' (4.33). [The Commentators quotation from the Ch. relates to meditation on the qualified Brahman. Lest it be concluded that the present verse relates to knowledge of the qualified Brahman only, he quotes again from the Gita to show that the conclusion holds good in the case of knowledge of the absolute Brahman as well.]

Therefore, before one attains the fitness for steadfastness in Knowledge, rites and duties, even though they have (limited) utility as that of a well, pond, etc., have to be undertaken by one who is fit for rites and duties.

2.47 Your right is for action alone, never for the results. Do not become the agent of the results of action. May you not have any inclination for inaction.

Te, your; adhikarah, right; is karmani eva, for action alone, not for steadfastness in Knowledge. Even there, when you are engaged in action, you have ma kadamana, never, i.e. under no condition whatever; a right phalesu, for the results of action-may you not have a hankering for the results of action. Whenever you have a hankering for the fruits of action, you will become the agent of acquiring the results of action. Ma, do not; thus bhuh, become; karma-phalahetuh, the agent of acquiring the results of action. For when one engages in action by being impelled by thirst for the results of action, then he does become the cause for the production of the results of action. Ma, may you not; astu, have; sangah, an inclination; akarmani, for inaction, thinking, 'If the results of work be not desired, what is the need of work which involves pain?'

2.48 By being established in Yoga, O Dhananjaya (Arjuna), undertake actions, casting off attachment and remaining equipoised in success and failure. Equanimity is called Yoga.



If action is not to be undertaken by one who is under the impulsion of the fruits of action, how then are they to be undertaken? This is being stated: Yogasthah, by becoming established in Yoga; O Dhanajaya, kuru, undertake; karmani, actions, for the sake of God alone; even there, tyaktva, casting off; sangam, attachment, in the form, 'God will be pleased with me.' ['Undertake work for pleasing God, but not for propitiating Him to become favourable towards yourself.']

Undertake actions bhutva, remaining; samah, equipoised; siddhi-asidhyoh, in success and failure-even in the success characterized by the attainment of Knowledge that arises from the purification of the mind when one performs actions without hankering for the results, and in the failure that arises from its opposite. [Ignorance, arising from the impurity of the mind.] What is that Yoga with regard to being established in which it is said, 'undertake'? This indeed is that: the samatvam, equanimity in success and failure; ucyate, is called; yogah, Yoga.

2.49 O Dhananjaya, indeed, action is quite inferior to the yoga of wisdom. Take resort to wisdom. Those who thirst for rewards are pitiable.

Then again, O Dhananjaya, as against action performed with equanimity of mind for adoring God, karma, action undertaken by one longing for the results; is, hi, indeed; durena, quite, by far; avaram, inferior, very remote; buddhi-yogat, from the yoga of wisdom, from actions undertaken with equanimity of mind, because it (the former) is the cause of birth, death, etc. Since this is so, therefore, saranam anviccha, take resort to, seek shelter; buddhau, under wisdom, which relates to Yoga, or to the Conviction about Reality that arises from its (the former's) maturity and which is the cause of (achieving) fearlessness. The meaning is that you should resort to the knowledge of the supreme Goal, because those who under take inferior actions, phala-hetavah, who thirst for rewards, who are impelled by results; are kṛpanah, pitiable, according to the Sruti, 'He, O Gargi, who departs from this world without knowing this Immutable, is pitiable' (Br. 3.8.10). [See note under 2.7.-Tr.]

2.50 Possessed of wisdom, one rejects here both virtue and vice. Therefore devote yourself to (Karma-) yoga. Yoga is skilfulness in action.

Listen to the result that one possessed of the wisdom of equanimity attains by performing one's own duties: Buddhi-yuktah, possessed of wisdom, possessed of the wisdom of equanimity; since one jahati, rejects; iha, here, in this world; ubhe, both; sukrta-duskrte, virtue and vice (righteousness and unrighteousness), through the purification of the mind and acquisition of Knowledge; tasmat, therefore; yujyasva, devote yourself; yogaya, to (Karma-) yoga, the wisdom of equanimity. For Yoga is kausalam, skilfulness; karmasu, in action. Skilfulness means the attitude of the skilful, the wisdom of equanimity with regard to one's success and failure while engaged in actions (karma)-called one's own duties (sva-dharma)-with the mind dedicated to God.

That indeed is skilfulness which, through equanimity, makes actions that by their very nature bind give up their nature! Therefore, be you devoted to the wisdom of equanimity.

2.51 Because, those who are devoted to wisdom, (they) becoming men of Enlightenment by giving up the fruits produced by actions, reach the state beyond evils by having become freed from the bondage of birth.

The words 'phalam tyaktva, by giving up the fruits' are connected with the remote word 'karmajam, produced by actions'.

Hi, because; [Because, when actions are performed with an attitude of equanimity, it leads to becoming freed from sin etc. Therefore, by stages, it becomes the cause of Liberation as well.] buddhi-yuktah, those who are devoted to wisdom, who are imbued with the wisdom of equanimity; (they) becoming manisinah, men of Enlightenment; tyaktva, by giving up; phalam, the fruit, the acquisition of desirable and undesirible bodies; [Desirable: the bodies of gods and others; undesirable: the bodies of animals etc.] karmajam, produced by actions; gacchanti, reach; padam, the state, the supreme state of Visnu, called Liberation; anamayam, beyond evils, i.e. beyond all evils; by having become janma-bandha-vinirmuktah, freed from the bondage of birth-birth (janma) itself is a bondage (bandha); becoming freed from that-, even while living.

Or:-Since it (buddhi) has been mentioned as the direct cause of the elimination of righteousness and unrighteousness, and so on, therefore what has been presented (in the three verses) beginning with, 'O Dhananjaya,...to the yoga of wisdom' (49), is enlightenment itself, which consists in the realization of the supreme Goal, which is comparable to a flood all around, and which arises from the purification of the mind as a result of Karma-yoga. [In the first portion of the Commentary buddhi has been taken to mean samattva buddhi (wisdom of equanimity); the alternative meaning of buddhi has been taken as 'enlightenment'. So, action is to be performed by taking the help of the 'wisdom about the supreme Reality' which has been chosen as one's Goal.]

2.52 When your mind will go beyond the turbidity of delusion, then you will acquire dispassion for what has to be heard and what has been heard.

When is attained that wisdom which arises from the-purification of the mind brought about by the pursuit of (karma-) yoga? This is being stated: Yada, when, [Yada: when maturity of discrimination is attained.] at the time when; te, your; buddhih, mind; vyatitarisyati, will go beyond, cross over; moha-kalilam, the turbidity of delusion, the dirt in the form of delusion, in the form of non-discrimination, which, after confounding one's understanding about the distinction between the Self and the not-Self, impels the mind towards objects-that is to say, when your mind will attain the state of purity; tada, then, [Tada: then, when the mind, becoming purified, leads to the rise of discrimination, which in turn matures into detachment.] at that time; gantasi, you will acquire; nirvedam, despassion; for srotavyasya, what has to be heard; ca, and; srutasya, what has been heard. The idea implied is that, at that time what has to be heard and what has been heard [What has to be heard....has been heard, i.e. the scriptures other than those relating to Self-knowledge. When discrimination referred to above gets matured, then the fruitlessness of all things other than Self-knowledge becomes apparent.] becomes fruitless.

2.53 When your mind that has become bewildered by hearing [S. takes the word sruti in the sense of the Vedas.-Tr.] will become unshakable and steadfast in the Self, then you will attain Yoga that arises from discrimination.

If it be asked, 'By becoming possessed of the wisdom arising from the discrimination about the Self after overcoming the turbidity of delusion, when shall I attain the yoga of the supreme Reality which is the fruit that results from Karma-yoga?', then listen to that; Yada, when at the time when; te, your; buddhih, mind; that has become sruti-vi-pratipanna, bewildered, tossed about, by hearing (the Vedas) that reveal the diverse ends, means, and (their) relationship, i.e. are filled with divergent ideas; sthasyati, will become; niscala, unshakable, free from the turbulence in the form of distractions; and acala, steadfast, that is to say, free from doubt even in that (unshakable) state; samadhau, in samadhi, that is to say, in the Self-samadhi being derived in the sense of that in which the mind is fixed; tada, then, at that time; avapsyasi, you will attain; yogam, Yoga, the enlightenment, Self-absorption, that arises from discrimination.

Having got an occasion for inquiry, Arjuna, with a view to knowing the characteristics of one who has the realization of the Self, [By the word samadhi is meant the enlightenment arising from discrimination, which has been spoken of in the commentary on the previous verse. The steadfastness which the monks have in that enlightenment is called steadfastness in Knowledge. Or the phrase may mean, 'the enlightenment achieved through meditation on the Self', i.e. the realization of the supreme Goal.] asked:

***Arjuna said:***

2.54 O kesava, what is the description of a man of steady wisdom who is Self-absorbed? How does the man of steady wisdom speak? How does he sit? How does he move about?

O Kesava, ka, what; is the bhasa, description, the language (for the description)- how is he described by others-; sthita-prajnasya, of a man of steady wisdom, of one whose realization, 'I am the supreme Brahman', remains steady; samadhi-sthasya, of one who is Self-absorbed? Or kim, how; does the sthitadhih, dhih, man of steady wisdom; himself probhaseta, speak? How does he asita, sit? How does he vrajeta, move about? That is to say, of what kind is his sitting or moving?

Through this verse Arjuna asks for a description of the man of steady wisdom.

***The Blessed Lord said:***

2.55 O Partha, when one fully renounces all the desires that have entered the mind, and remains satisfied in the Self alone by the Self, then he is called a man of steady wisdom.

In the verses beginning from, 'When one fully renounces...', and ending with the completion the Chapter, instruction about the characteristics of the man of steady wisdom and the disciplines (he had to pass through) is being given both for the one who has, indeed, applied himself to steadfastness in the Yoga of Knowledge after having renounced rites and duties from the very beginning [Even while he is in the stage of celibacy.], and for the one who has (applied himself to this after having passed) through the path of Karma-yoga. For in all the scriptures without exception, dealing, with spirituality, whatever are the characteristics of the man of realization are themselves presented as the disciplines for an aspirant, because these (characteristics) are the result of effort. And those that are the disciplines requiring effort, they become the characteristics (of the man of realization). [There are two kinds of sannyasa-vidvat (renunciation that naturally follows Realization), and vividisa, formal renunciation for undertaking the disciplines which lead to that Realization. According to A.G. the characteristics presented in this and the following verses describe not only the vidvat-sannyasin, but are also meant as disciplines for the vividisa-sannyasin.-Tr.]

O Partha, yada, when, at the time when; prajahati, one fully renounces; sarvan, all; the kaman, desires, varieties of desires; manogatan, that have entered the mind, entered into the heart-.

If all desires are renounced while the need for maintaining the body persists, then, in the absence of anything to bring satisfaction, there may arise the possibility of one's behaving like lunatics or drunkards. [A lunatic is one who has lost his power of discrimination, and a drunkard is one who has that power but ignores it.] Hence it is said: Tustah, remains satisfied; atmani eva, in the Self alone, in the very nature of the inmost Self; atmana, by the Self which is his own-indifferent to external gains, and satiated with everything else on account of having attained the nectar of realization of the supreme



Goal; tada, then; ucyate, he is called; sthita-prajnah, a man of steady wisdom, a man of realization, one whose wisdom, arising from the discrimination between the Self and the not-Self, is stable.

The idea is that the man of steady wisdom is a monk, who has renounced the desire for progeny, wealth and the worlds, and who delights in the Self and disports in the Self.

2.56 That monk is called a man of steady wisdom when his mind is unperturbed in sorrow, he is free from longing for delights, and has gone beyond attachment, fear and anger.

Moreover, that munih, monk [Sankaracarya identifies the monk with the man of realization.] ucyate, is then called; sthita-dhih, a man of steady wisdom; when anudvignamanah, his mind is unperturbed; dukkhesu, in sorrow-when his mind remains unperturbed by the sorrows that may come on the physical or other planes [Fever, headache, etc. are physical (adhyatmika) sorrows; sorrows caused by tigers, snakes, etc. are environmental (adhibhautika) sorrows; those caused by cyclones, floods, etc. are supernatural (adhidaivika). Similarly, delights also may be experienced on the three planes.]-; so also, when he is vigata-sprah, free from longing; sukhesu, for delights-when he, unlike fire which flares up when fed with fuel etc., has no longing for delights when they come to him-; and vita-raga-bhaya-krodhah, has gone beyond attachment, fear and anger.

2.57 The wisdom of that person remains established who has not attachment for anything anywhere, who neither welcomes nor rejects anything whatever good or bad when he comes across it.

Further, prajna, the wisdom; tasya, of that person, fo that sannyasin; pratisthita, remains established; yah, who; anabhi-snehah, has no attachment for; sarvatra, anything anywhere, even for body, life, etc.; who na abhinanadati, neither welcomes; na dvesti, nor rejects; tat tat, anything whatever; subha-asubham, good or bad; propya, when he comes across it, i.e. who does not rejoice on meeting with the good, nor reject the bad on meeting with it. Of such a person, who is thus free from elation or dejection, the wisdom arising from discrimination remains established.

2.58 And when this one fully withdraws the senses from the objects of the senses, as a tortoise wholly (withdraws) the limbs, then his wisdom remains established.

And besides, yada, when; ayam, this one, the sannyasin practising steadfastness in Knowledge; samharate, fully withdraws; ['Fully' suggests absolute firmness in withdrawal, and 'withdraws' suggests full control over the organs] indriyani, the senses; indriya-arthebhyah, from all the objects of the senses; iva, as; kurmah, a tortoise; sarvasah, wholly (with-draws); angani, its limbs, from all sides out of fear;- when the man engaged in steadfastness to Knowledge withdraws thus, then tasya, his; prajna, wisdom; pratisthita, remains established-(the meaning of this portion has already been explained).

As to that, [That is , so far as the phenomenal world is concerned.] the organs of a sick person, too, cease to be active when the refrains from sense-objects; they get fully withdrawn like the limbs of a tortoise. but not so the hankering for those objects. How that (hankering) gets completely withdrawn is being stated:

2.59 The objects recede from an abstinent man, with the exception of the taste (for them). Even the taste of this person falls away after realization the Absolute.

Although visayah, the objects, (i.e.) the organs, figuratively implied and expressed by the word 'objects', or, the objects themselves; vinivartante, recede; niraharasya dehinah, from an abstinent man, from an embodied being, even from a fool who engages in painful austerity and abstains from objects; (still, they do so) rasavarjam, with the exception of the taste (for them), with the exception of the hankering that one has for objects. The word rasa is well known as referring to the sense of taste (hankering), as in such expressions as, 'sva-rasena pravrttatah, induced by his own taste (i.e. willingly)', 'rasikah, a man of tastes', 'rasajnah, a connoisseur (of tastes)', etc. Api, even that; rasah, taste of the nature of subtle attachment; asya, of this person, of the sannyasin; nivartate, falls away, i.e. his objective perception becomes seedless; when drstva, after attaining; param, the Absolute, the Reality which is the supreme Goal, Brahman, he continues in life with the realization, 'I verily am That (Brahman).'

In the absence of full realization there can be no eradication of the 'hankering'. The idea conveyed is that, one should therefore stabilize one's wisdom which is characterized by full realization. [If it be held that attachment cannot be eliminated without the knowledge of Brahman, and at the same time that the knowledge of Brahman cannot arise until attachment is eradicated, then we get involved in a vicious circle. In answer it is said that gross attachments are eliminated through discrimination which restrains the senses from being overpowered by objects. And the full Knowledge arising thereof eliminates the subtle inclinations as well. Hence there is no vicious circle involved.]

Since the organs have to be first brought under his own control by one who desires to establish firmly the wisdom which is characterized by full realization, therefore the Lord speaks of the evil that arises from not keeping them under control:

2.60 For, O son of Kunti, the turbulent organs violently snatch away the mind of an intelligent person, even while he is striving diligently.

Hi, for; kaunteya, O son of Kunti; pramathini, the turbulent; indriyani, organs; prasabham, violently; haranti, snatch away; manah, the mind; vipascitah, of an intelligent; purusasya, person; api, even; yatatah, while he is striving diligently [Repeatedly being mindful of the evils that arise from sense-objects.]- (or,) the words purusasya vipascitah (of an intelligent person) are to be connected with the remote word api (even). [The Commentator says that api may be construed either with yatatah or with vipascitah purusasya.- Tr.] Indeed, the organs confound a person who is inclined towards objects, and after confounding him, violently carry away his mind endowed with discriminating knowledge, even when he is aware of this.

Since this is so, therefore,

2.61 Controlling all of them, one should remain concentrated on Me as the supreme. For, the wisdom of one whose organs are under control becomes steadfast.

Samyamya, controlling, having subdued; sarvani, all; tani, of them; asita, one should remain; yukta, concentrated; mat-parah, on Me as the supreme-he to whom I, Vasudeva, the inmost Self of all, am the supreme (parah) is mat-parah. The idea is, he should remain (concentrated) thinking, 'I am not different from Him.'

Hi, for; the prajna, wisdom; tasya, of one, of the sannyasin remaining thus concentrated; yasya, whose; indriyani, organs; are vase, under control, by dint of practice; [The organs come under control either by constantly thinking of oneself as non-different from the Self, or by constantly being mindful of the evils that result from objects.] pratisthita, becomes steadfast.

Now, then, is being stated this [This: what is described in the following two verses, and is also a matter of common experience.] root, cause of all the evils that beset one who is the verge of being overwhelmed:

2.62 In the case of a person who dwells on objects, there arises attachment for them. From attachment grows hankering, from hankering springs anger.

2.63 From anger follows delusion; from delusion, failure of memory; from failure of memory, the loss of understanding; from the loss of understanding, he perishes.

Pumsah, in the case of a person; dhyayatah, who dwells on, thinks of; visayan, the objects, the specialities [Specialities: The charms imagined in them.] of the objects such as sound etc.; upajayate, there arises; sangah, attachment, fondness, love; tesu, for them, for those objects. Sangat, from attachment, from love; sanjayate, grows; kamah, hankering, thirst. When that is obstructed from any quarter, kamat, from hankering; abhijayate, springs; krodhah, anger. Krodhat, from anger; bhavati, follows; sammohah, delusion, absence of discrimination with regard to what should or should not be done. For, an angry man, becoming deluded, abuses even a teacher.

Sammohat, from delusion; (comes) smrti-vibhramah, failure of memory originating from the impressions acquired from the instructions of the scriptures and teachers. When there is an occasion for memory to rise, it does not occur. Smrti-bhramasat, from that failure of memory; (results) buddhi-nasah, loss of understanding. The unfitness of the mind to discriminate between what should or should not be done is called loss of understanding. Buddhi-nasat, from the loss of understanding; pranasyati, he perishes. Indeed, a man continues to be himself so long as his mind remains fit to distinguish between what he ought to and ought not do. When it becomes unfit, a man is verily ruined. Therefore, when his internal organ, his understanding, is destroyed, a man is ruined, i.e. he becomes unfit for the human Goal.

Thinking of objects has been said to be the root of all evils. After that, this which is the cause of Liberation is being now stated: [If even the memory of objects be a source of evil, then their enjoyment is more so. Hence, a sannyasin seeking Liberation cannot avoid this evil, since he has to move about for food which is necessary for the maintenance of his body. The present verse is an answer to this apprehension.]

2.64 But by perceiving objects with the organs that are free from attraction and repulsion, and are under his own control, the self-controlled man attains serenity.

Certainly the functions of the organs are naturally preceded by attraction and repulsion. This being so, *caran*, by perceiving; *visayan*, objects, which are unavoidable; *indriyaih*, with the organs such as ears etc.; *raga-dvesa-viyuktaih*, that are free from those attraction and repulsion; and are *atma-vasyaih*, under his own control; *vidheya-atma*, [A.G. takes *atma-vasyaih* in the sense of '(with the organs) under the control of the mind'. He then argues that if the mind be not under control, there can be no real control, over the organs. Hence the text uses the second expression, '*vidheyatma*, whose mind can be subdued at will'. Here *atma* is used in the sense of the mind, according to the Commentator himself.] the self-controlled man, whose mind can be subdued at will, a seeker after Liberation; *adhigacchati*, attains; *prasadam*, serenity, self-poise.

What happens when there is serenity? This is being answered:

2.65 When there is serenity, there follows eradication of all his sorrows, because the wisdom of one who has a serene mind soon becomes firmly established.

Prasade, when there is serenity; upajayate, there follows; hanih, eradication; asya sarva-duhkhanam, of all his, the sannyasin's, sorrow on the physical and other planes. Moreover, (this is so) hi, because; buddhih, the wisdom; prasanna-cetasah, of one who has a serene mind, of one whose mind is poised in the Self; asu, soon; pari-avatisthate, becomes firmly established; remains steady (avatisthate) totally (pari), like the sky, i.e. it becomes unmoving in its very nature as the Self.

The meaning of the sentence is this: Since a person with such a poised mind and well-established wisdom attains fulfilment, therefore a man of concentration [A man who is free whom slavery to objects of the senses.] ought to deal with the indispensable and scripturally non-forbidden objects through his senses that are free from love and hatred.

That same serenity is being eulogized:

2.66 For the unsteady there is no wisdom, and there is no meditation for the unsteady man. And for an unmeditative man there is no peace. How can there be happiness for one without peace?



Ayuktasya, for the unsteady, for one who does not have a concentrated mind; na asti, there is no, i.e. there does not arise; buddhih, wisdom, with regard to the nature of the Self; ca, and; there is no bhavana, meditation, earnest longing [Longing to have a continuous remembrance of the knowledge of Brahman which arises in the mind from hearing the great Upanisadic sayings (maha-vakyas).] for the knowledge of the Self; ayuktasya, for an unsteady man. And similarly, abhavayatah, for an unmeditative man, who does not ardently desire the knowledge of the Self; there is no santih, peace, restraint of the senses. Kutah, how can there be; sukham, happiness; asantasya, for one without peace? That indeed is happiness which consists in the freedom of the senses from the thirst for enjoyment of objects; not the thirst for objects-that is misery to be sure.

The implication is that, so long as thirst persists, there is no possibility of even an iota of happiness!

It is being stated why a man without concentration does not possess wisdom:

2.67 For, the mind which follows in the wake of the wandering senses, that (mind) carries away his wisdom like the mind (diverting) a boat on the waters.

Hi, for; yat manah, the mind which; anu-vidhiyate, follows in the wake of; caratam, the wandering; indriyani, senses that are tending towards their respective objects; tat, that, the mind engaged in thinking [Perceiving objects like sound etc. in their respective varieties.] of the objects of the senses; harati, carries away, destroys; asya, his, the sannyasin's; prajnam, wisdom born from the discrimination between the Self and the not-Self. How? Iva, like; vayuh, the wind; diverting a navam, boat; ambhasi, on the waters. As wind, by diverting a boat on the waters from its intended course, drives it along a wrong course, similarly the mind, by diverting the wisdom from the pursuit of the Self, makes it engage in objects.

After having stated variously the reasons for the idea conveyed through the verse, 'For, O son of Kunti,' etc. (60), and having established that very idea, the Lord concludes thus:

2.68 Therefore, O mighty-armed one, this wisdom becomes established whose organs in all their varieties are withdrawn from their objects.

Since the evils arising from the activities of the organs have been described, tasmat, therefore; mahabaho, O mighty-armed one; tasya, his, the sannyasin's; prajna, wisdom; pratisthita, becomes established; yasya, whose; indriyani, organs; sarvasah, in all their varieties, differentiated as mind etc.; nigrhitani, are withdrawn; indriya-arthebhyah, from their objects such as sound etc.

In the case of a man of steady wisdom in whom has arisen discriminating knowledge, those which are these ordinary and Vedic dealings cease on the eradication of ignorance, they being effects of ignorance. And ignorance ceases because it is opposed to Knowledge. For clarifying this idea, the Lord says:

2.69 The self-restrained man keeps awake during that which is night for all creatures. That during which creatures keep awake, it is night to the seeing sage.

ya, that which; sarva-bhutanam, for all creatures; is nisa, night-which being darkness (tamah) by nature, obliterates distinctions among all things; what is that? that is the Reality which is the supreme Goal, accessible to the man of steady wisdom. As that which verily appears as day to the nocturnal creatures is night for others, similarly the Reality which is the supreme Goal appears to be night, as it were, to all unenlightened beings who are comparable to the nocturnal creatures, because It is beyond the range of vision of those who are devoid of that wisdom.

Samyami, the self-restrained man, whose organs are under control, i.e. the yogi [The man of realization.] who has arisen from the sleep of ignorance; jagarti, keeps awake; tasyam, in that (night) characterized as the Reality, the supreme Goal. That night of ignorance, characterized by the distinctions of subjects and objects, yasyam in which; bhutani, the creatures, who are really asleep; are said to be jagrati, keeping awake, in which night they are like dreamers in sleep; sa nisa, it is night; pasyatah, to the seeing; muneh, sage, who perceives the Reality that is the supreme Goal, because that (night) is ignorance by nature.

Therefore, rites and duties are enjoined only during the state of ignorance, not in the state of enlightenment. For, when Knowledge dawns, ignorance becomes eradicated like the darkness of night after sun-rise. [It may be argued that even after illumination the phenomenal world, though it is known to be false, will continue to be perceived because of the persistence of past impressions; therefore there is scope for the validity of the scriptural injunctions even in the case of an illumined soul. The answer is that there will be no scope for the injunctions, because the man of realization will then have no ardent leaning towards this differentiated phenomenal world which makes an injunction relevant.] Before the rise of Knowledge, ignorance, accepted as a valid means of knowledge and presenting itself in the different forms of actions, means and results, becomes the cause of all rites

and duties. It cannot reasonably become the source of rites and duties (after Realization) when it is understood as an invalid means of knowledge. For an agent becomes engaged in actions when he has the idea, 'Actions have been enjoined as a duty for me by the Vedas, which are a valid means of knowledge'; but not when he understands that 'all this is mere ignorance, like the night'.

Again, the man to whom has come the Knowledge that all these differences in their totality are mere ignorance like the night, to that man who has realized the Self, there is eligibility only for renouncing all actions, not for engaging in actions. In accordance with this the Lord will show in the verse, 'Those who have their intellect absorbed in That, whose Self is That' (5.17) etc., that he has competence only for steadfastness in Knowledge.

**Objection:** May it not be argued that, there will be no reason for being engaged even in that (steadfastness in Knowledge) if there be no valid means of knowledge [Vedic injunctions.] to impel one to that. [Because, without an injunction nobody would engage in a duty, much less in steadfastness to Knowledge.]

**Answer:** No, since 'knowledge of the Self' relates to one's own Self. Indeed, by the very fact that It is the Self, and since the validity of all the means of knowledge culminates in It, [The validity of all the means of knowledge holds good only so long as the knowledge of the Self has not arisen.] therefore the Self does not depend on an injunction to impel It towards Itself. [Does the injunction relate to the knowledge of the Self. or to the Self Itself? The first alternative is untenable because a valid means of knowledge reveals its objects even without an injunction. The second alternative also is untenable because the Self is self-revealing, whereas an injunction is possible in the case of something yet to be achieved. And one's own Self is not an object of that kind.] Surely, after the realization of the true nature of the Self, there is no scope again for any means to, or end of, knowledge. The

last valid means of (Self-) knowledge eradicates the possibility of the Self's becoming a perceiver. And even as it eradicates, it loses its own authoritativeness, in the same way as the means of knowledge which is valid in dream becomes unauthoritative during the waking state. In the world, too, after the preception of an abject, the valid means of that perception is not seen to be a cause impelling the knower (to any action with regard to that object).

Hence, it is established that, for an knower of the Self, there remains no eligibility for rites and duties.

The attainment of Liberation is only for the sannyasin [Liberation is attained only by one who, after acquiring an intellectual knowledge of the Self in a general way, is endowed with discrimination and detachment, has arisen above all desires, has become a monk in the primary sense, and has directly realized the Self by going through the process of sravana (understanding of Upanisadic texts about the Self), etc.], the man of enlightenment, who has renounced all desires and is a man of steady wisdom; but not for him who has not renounced and is desirous of the objects (of the senses). Such being the case, with a view to establishing this with the help of an illustration, the Lord says:

2.70 That man attains peace into whom all desires enter in the same way as the waters flow into a sea that remains unchanged (even) when being filled up from all sides. Not so one who is desirous of objects.

Sah, that man; apnoti, attains; santim, peace Liberation; yam, into whom, into which person; sarve, all; kamah, desires, all forms of wishes; pravisanti, enter, from all directions, like waters entering into a sea, without overwhelming him even in the presence of objects; they vanish in the Self, they do not bring It under their own influence, tadvat, in the same way; yadvat, as; apah, waters, coming from all sides; pravisanti, flow into; samudram, a sea; that remains acala-pratistham, unchanged, that continues to be its own self, without any change; apuryamanam, (even) when filled up from all sides with water.

Na, not so the other; who is kama-kami, desirous of objects. Kama means objects which are sought after. He who is given to desire them is kama-kami. The idea implied is that he never attains (peace).

Since this is so, therefore.

2.71 That man attains peace who, after rejecting all desires, moves about free from hankering, without the idea of ('me' and) 'mine', and devoid of pride.

Sah puman, that man who has become thus, the sannyasin, the man of steady wisdom, the knower of Brahman; adhi-gacchati, attains; santim, peace, called Nirvana, consisting in the cessation of all the sorrows of mundane existence, i.e. he becomes one with Brahman; yah, who; vihaya, after rejecting; sarvan, all; kaman, desires, without a trace, fully; carati, moves about, i.e. wanders about, making efforts only for maintaining the body; nihsprah, free from hankering, becoming free from any longing even for the maintenance of the body; nirmamah, without the idea of ('me' and 'mine', without the deeprooted idea of 'mine' even when accepting something needed merely for the upkeep of the body; and nir-ahankarah, devoid of pride, i.e. free from self esteem owing to learning etc.

This steadfastness in Knowledge, which is such, is being praised:

2.72 O Partha, this is the state of being established in Brahman. One does not become deluded after attaining this. One attains identification with Brahman by being established in this state even in the closing years of one's life.

O Partha, esa, this, the aforesaid; is brahmisthitih, the state of being established in Brahman, i.e. continuing (in life) in identification with Brahman, after renouncing all actions.

Na vimuhyati, one does not become deluded; prapya, after attaining ; enam, this Rcchati, one attains; brahma-nirvanam, identification with Brahman, Liberation; sthitva, by being established; asyam, in this, in the state of Brahman-hood as described; api, even; anta-kale, in the closing years of one's life. What need it be said that, one who remains established only in Brahman during the whole life, after having espoused monasticism even from the stage of celibacy, attains identification with Brahman!



# Chapter 3 - Karma Yoga

Commentary by Sri Adi Sankaracharya, Translated by Swami Gambhirananda

Two kinds of Convictions, viz the Conviction concerning Reality, and the Conviction concerning Yoga, associated with detachment from and engagement in action (respectively), which are dealt with in this Scripture (Gita), have been indicated by the Lord. As to that, beginning with 'When one fully renounces all the desires' (2.55) and ending with the close of the Chapter, the Lord, having stated that sannyasa, monasticism, has to be resorted to by those who are devoted to the Conviction about the Reality (Sankhya-buddhi), has also added in the verse, 'this is the state of being established in Brahman' (2.72), that their fulfilment comes from devotion to that alone. Besides, in the verse, 'Your right is for action alone....May you not have any inclination for inaction' (2.47), the Lord said to Arjuna that duty had to be undertaken with the aid of the Conviction about Yoga (Yoga-buddhi). [See Commentary on 2.10.-Tr.] But he did not say that Liberation is attained through that alone.

Noticing this, such as it was, Arjuna got his mind puzzled and said (to himself): 'Having first made me, who am His devotee seeking Liberation, hear about steadfastness in the Conviction about Reality, which is the direct cause of Liberation, why should He urge me to action which is seen to bristle with many evils, and from which, even through an indirect process, the result, viz Liberation, is unpredicable?' Thus, Arjuna's becoming perplexed is reasonable. And the question, 'If it be Your opinion that Wisdom is superior to action....'etc., is consistent with that. The statement answering the question has been uttered by the Lord in this Scripture, where the division of the subject-matter referred to above has been dealt with.

Some, however, imagine the meaning of Arjuna's question to be otherwise, and explain the Lord's answer contrarily to that. [To understand this controversy, refer to the Commentary on 2.10.-Tr.] Here again, [In the

beginning of the third chapter.] they ascertain the meaning of the question and the answer inconsistently with what they themselves have determined in their Introduction to be the purport of the Gita.

How?

As to that, in that Introduction it has been said by them that in the scripture Gita, the conclusion presented for people in all the stages of life is the combination of Knowledge and action. It has been again specifically stated by them that (in the Gita) it is absolutely denied that Liberation is attained through Knowledge alone, by renouncing action enjoined by the Vedic text, '(One should perform the Agnihotra sacrifice) throughout life.' But here (in the third chapter), when they show that the stages of life are distinct, the renunciation of those very actions which have been enjoined by the Vedic text, '(One should perform the Agnihotra sacrifice) throughout one's life', becomes admitted by them, ipso facto. Therefore, how can the Lord say such a contradictory thing to Arjuna? Or how can the hearer comprehend a contradictory statement?

**Objection:** In that case, let it be thus: With regard to the householders alone it is denied that, by renouncing all Vedic rites and duties, Liberation can be attained through (superficial) Knowledge alone; but not so with regard to those belonging to the other stages of life.

**Reply:** Even this involves a contradiction between the earlier and the later statements.

**Objection:** How?

**Reply:** After having proposed in their Introduction that the ascertained teaching of the scripture Gita is the combination of Knowledge and action for people in all the stages of life, how can they assert here contradictorily that, in the case of persons in stages of life other than that of the householders, Liberation comes from Knowledge alone?

**Objection:** Suppose it is held that this assertion is made with regard to Vedic rites and duties, i.e. it is denied that householders can have Liberation through Knowledge alone which is unassociated with Vedic rituals. By ignoring those duties of the householders which are prescribed by the Smrtis, as if they (the duties) were nonexistent- even though they are present in fact-, it is said in that context that there can be no Liberation only from Knowledge. [The duties sanctioned by the Smrtis have to be performed by all, irrespective of the stages of life they are in; they are a common factor in the lives of all spiritual aspirants, and hence, their existence need not be considered separately with regard to the householders. So, when it is said that those other than the householders cannot have Liberation from Knowledge alone, it is to be understood that they attain Liberation through Knowledge combined with duties prescribed by the Smrtis.-Tr.]

**Reply:** Even this is contradictory !

**Objection:** How ?

**Reply:** How can it be understood by discrimination people that, Liberation through Knowledge combined with action (rites and duties) prescribed by the Smrtis is denied in the case of householders alone, but not with regard to others? Moreover, if, in the case of the sannyasins, actions (rites and duties) prescribed by the Smrtis have to be combined with Knowledge as a means to Liberation, then even for the householders you should accept the combination of Knowledge with actions sanctioned by the Smrtis only not with those sanctioned by the Vedas. On the other hand, if it be held that for Liberation, Knowledge has to be combined with actions sanctioned by the Vedas and the Smrtis in the case the householders only, but for the sannyasins the combination has to be with actions sanctioned by the Smrtis alone, then, in that case, on the householder's head will be placed the burden of much exertion in the form of greatly painful actions prescribed by the Vedas and the Smrtis!

Again, if it be argued that Liberation will be attained by householders alone on account of their undertaking tasks requiring much diligence, but people in other stages of life will not have it because of their non-performance of the Vedic and the daily obligatory duties (nitya-karma, prescribed by the Smrtis), then that too is wrong since, with regard to the seekers of Liberation, renunciation of all actions has been prescribed as an accessory of Knowledge by all the Upanisads, History, Puranas and Yoga-scripures. And this follows also from the sanction in the Vedas and the Smrtis for following the stages of life either optionally or successively. [The Jabala Upanisad says: 'After completing (the stage of) Celibacy, one should become a householder; from householder-ship he should become an anchorite (lit. a forest-dweller), and then become a mendicant. Or, if it happens otherwise, one should espouse monasticism even from the stage of Celibacy, or from his house (i.e. from the stage of the Householder), or from the forest' (see Ja. 4.1). The first sentence speaks of successive progress towards monasticism, and the second speaks of optional adoption of monasticism.

Combination of Knowledge with action may be of two kinds, krama-samuccaya and saha-samuccaya, Krama-samuccaya is where an aspirant embraces monasticism by gradually passing through the different stages of life. This is an indirect combination of Knowledge with action (rites and duties). Sankaracarya is ready to concede this in the case of some people. There is also the other alternative of saha-samuccaya, where Knowledge is sought to be directly combined with action. Sankaracarya rejects this standpoint totally. The Jabala first speaks of kramasamuccaya, and then, by holding that one can become a monk from any stage of life, it rejects saha-samuccaya. Besides, there is the Upanisadic text, 'yadahareva virajet tadahareva pravrajat, one should renounce the very moment he acquires detachment' (Ja. 4). A.G. quotes a Smrtis which, too, says, 'One should have recourse to that stage of life to which he is inclined.'-Tr.]

**Obejction:** In that case, the conclusion is that Knowledge and action should be combined by people in all stages of life ?

**Reply:** No, because it is enjoined in the Upanisadic texts that a man aspiring for Liberation should give up all actions:

'(Knowing this very Self the Bramanas) renounce (the desire for sons, for wealth and for the worlds), and lead a mendicant life' (Br. 3.5.1; also see 4.4.22);

'Therefore they speak of monasticism as something surpassing all these austerities' (Ma. Na. 24.1);

'Monasticism verily became supreme' (ibid. 21.2);

'The few who obtained Immortality did so not through action, nor progeny, nor wealth, but through renunciation alone' (ibid. 10.5; Kai. 2); [The references to these quotations from the Ma. Na. are numbered according to C.P.U. According to the Ma. Na. published from the Remakrishna Math, Madras, the reference numbers are 79.16, 78.12 and 12.14 respectively.-Tr.] and ,

'One should take to monasticism from the stage of Celibacy itself' (Ja. 4), etc.

Besides, (in the Smṛti) it is said:

'Giving up religion and irreligion, give up both the real and the unreal, give up that [The idea of agenship.] through which they are renounced' (Mbh. Sa. 329.40; 331.44).

And Brhaspati said to Kaca: 'Noticing that the phenomenal world is verily hollow, and desiring to realize the Essence (Brahman), they, even while remaining unmarried, take to monasticism by embracing supreme

renunciation.' [Ast. omits 'kacam prati, to Kaca', and notes that this verse occurs in Na. Par. (3.15) without any reference to Brahaspati.-Tr.]

(Vyasa's) instruction to Suka is this:

'A being gets bound down by actions, and he is liberated by Illumination. Therefore, the sannyasins who have realized the Transcendental (Self) do not undertake any action (rites and duties)' (Mbh. Sa. 24.17).

Here also occurs the text, 'having given up all actions mentally,' etc. (5.13). Further, as Liberation is not a result (of action), actions become useless for one aspiring for Liberation.

**Objection:** May it not be argued that the daily obligatory duties (nitya-karmas) have to be performed as to avoid sin? [Cf: 'By not performing the enjoined rites, and doing those which are prohibited, and indulging in sense-objects, a man suffers downfall.' (quoted by A.G.)

Rites are divided under three categories-nitya, naimittika and kamya. Nityas are daily obligatory duties such as Agnihotra, repeating Gayatri, etc. every morning and evening; naimittikas are occasional duties such as sraddha (obsequies, prayascitta (expiation), etc.; karmyas are rites performed for some particular purpose and with a view to future fruition, e.g. kariri-sacrifice performed to get rains; putresti done for getting a son; a svamedha for going to heaven.

Nitya-karmas are supposed to yield no result, but their nonperformance brings evil. Sankaracarya refutes this theory. According to him, nitya-karmas have a positive result in as much as they purify the mind, or they lead to heaven.-Tr.]

**Reply:** Non, because the incurring of sin concerns those who are not monks. As by not performing rituals etc. connected with fire, sin accrues even to the Brahmacharins who are performers of rites and duties and are not monks, it

certainly cannot be imagined similarly with regard to a sannyasin. [Sin is incurred by one who fails to perform the rites and duties enjoined on him according to his stage of life. A Brahmacarin, whose duty is to study the Vedas and keep the sacred fire burning with fuel, incurs sin by not doing so. But the sannyasin cannot incur sin by the non-performance of what is not his duty.] For that matter, neither can it be imagined that sin which is a positive entity can be generated from the mere absence of daily obligatory duties (nitya-karmas), because of the Upanisadic text, 'How can existence come out of nonexistence?' (Ch. 6.2.2), which speaks of the impossibility of the birth of existence from nonexistence. Should the Vedas speak even of the impossible, that sin accrues from the non-performance of enjoined rites, then it will amount to saying that the Vedas are a source of evil and hence invalid! For the result of either doing or not doing what is enjoined would be pain. [Performance of rites involves pain such as irritation of the eyes due to smoke, monetary expenses, etc., and non-performance too would produce sin!] And thereby an illogical conjecture would have been made that the scriptures are creative and not informative. [The scriptures proceed by accepting the powers of objects as they are known, and not by imparting to them powers they (the objects) do not have. In this sense the Vedas are informative, and not creative.] And this is not desirable. Therefore, rites and duties are not for monks. Hence, the combination of Knowledge and action does not stand to reason.

Moreover, Arjuna's question, 'If it be Your opinion that Wisdom is superior to action,' etc. becomes unjustifiable. For, if it be that the Lord had said in the second chapter, 'Knowledge and action, in combination, have to be pursued by you', then Arjuna's question, 'O Janardana, if it be Your opinion that Wisdom is superior to action,' etc. becomes unreasonable. Had it been said to Arjuna, 'Wisdom and action are to be practised by you', then that Wisdom which is superior to action also stands stated as a matter of course. In that case, Arjuna's [Here, Ast. adds 'upalambho va, accusation, or'.-Tr.] question,



'why then do you urge me to horrible action?', cannot in any way be logical. Nor can it be reasonably imagined that the Lord had said earlier that Wisdom which is superior should not be practised by Arjuna alone, from which could arise the question, 'If it be your opinion that Wisdom is superior to action...?' [Ast. adds 'vivekatah, by making a distinction (between the pursuit of Knowledge and of action)'.-Tr.]

Again, had it been stated earlier by the Lord that Knowledge and actions are to be pursued by different persons since they, owing to mutual contradiction, cannot be simultaneously pursued by one and the same person, they only would this question, 'If it be Your opinion,' etc. become logical. Even if it be supposed that the question has been put owing to non-discrimination, still, the Lord's reply that they (Knowledge and action) are to be pursued by different persons does not become rational. Besides, it should not be imagined that the Lord's answer is given out of His misunderstanding. And from these considerations, since the Lord's answer is seen to be that the steadfastness in Knowledge and in action are meant for different persons, therefore it follows that combination of Knowledge and action is illogical. Hence, the well-ascertained conclusion in the Gita and all the Upanisads is that Liberation follows from Knowledge alone.

Further, if it were possible to combine both of them, then the prayer, 'Tell me for certain one of these,' with regard to either Knowledge or action, becomes inconsistent. And by His emphatic statement, 'Therefore you undertake action itself' (4.15), the Lord will show the impossibility for Arjuna to be steadfast in Knowledge.

### **Arjuna said:**

3.1 O Janardana (Kṛṣṇa), if it be Your opinion that wisdom is superior to action, why then do you urge me to horrible action, O Kṛṣṇa ?

O Janardana, cet, if it be; te, Your; mata, opinion, intention; that buddhih, Wisdom; jyayasi, is superior; karmanah, to action-.

If the combination of Wisdom and action be intended (by the Lord), then the means to Liberation is only one. [The path combining Wisdom and action.] In that case, Arjuna would have done something illogical in separating Wisdom from action by saying that Wisdom is superior to action. For, that (Wisdom or action, which is a constituent of the combination) cannot be greater than that (Combination, even) from the point of view of the result. [Since what is intended is a combination, therefore, the separation of Knowledge from action, from the point of view of the result, is not justifiable. When Knowledge and action are considered to form together a single means to Liberation, in that case each of them cannot be considered separately as producing its own distinct result. Arjuna's question can be justified only if this separation were possible.] Similarly, what Arjuna said by way of censuring the Lord, as it were, in, 'It has been stated by the Lord that Wisdom is superior to action, and He exhorts me saying, "Undertake action," which is a source of evil! What may be the reason for this?', and also in, 'Tatkim, why then, O Kesava; niyojayasi, do You urge; mam, me; to ghore, horrible, cruel; karmani, action; involving injury?'-that (censure) also does not become reasonable.

On the other hand, [If the opponent's view be that Knowledge is to be combined with rites and duties sanctioned by the Vedas and the Smrtis in the case of the householders only, whereas for others those sanctioned by the Smrtis alone are to be combined with Knowledge..., then....] if it be supposed that the combination (of Knowledge) with action sanctioned only by the Smrtis has been enjoined for all by the Lord, and Arjuna also comprehended (accordingly), then, how can the statement, 'Why then do you urge me to horrible action', be rational?

Besides,

3.2 You bewilder my understanding, as it were, by a seemingly conflicting statement! Tell me for certain one of these by which I may attain the highest Good.

'Though the Lord speaks lucidly, still, to me who am of a dull understanding, the Lord's utterance appears to be conflicting.' 'Mohayasi, You bewilder; me, any; buddhim, understanding; iva, as it were; vyamisrena iva, by that seemingly conflicting; vakyena, statement! You have surely undertaken to dispel the confusion of my understanding; but why do You bewildered (it)? Hence I say, "You bewildered my understanding, as it were."

However, if You [In some readings, 'tvam tu, however, you', is substituted by 'tatra, as to that'. -Tr.] think that it is impossible for a single person to pursue both Knowledge and action, which can be undertaken (only) by different persons then, that being the case, vada, tell me; niscitya, for certain; tadekam, one of these, either Knowledge or action: "This indeed is fit for Arjuna, according to his understanding, strength and situation"; yena, by which, by one of either Knowledge or action; aham, I; apnuyam, may attain; sreyah, the highest Good.'

Even if Knowledge had been spoken of at all by the Lord as being subsidiary to steadfastness in action, how then could there be the desire in Arjuna to know of only one of them, as expressed in 'Tell me one of these two?' Certainly the Lord did not say, 'I shall speak of only one among Knowledge and action, but surely not of both', owing to which, Arjuna, considering it impossible for himself to acquire both, should have prayed for one only!

The answer was in accordance with the question:

***The Blessed Lord said:***

3.3 O unblemished one, two kinds of steadfastness in this world were spoken of by Me in the days of yore-through the Yoga of Knowledge for the men of realization; through the Yoga of Action for the yogis.

Anagha, O unblemished one, O sinless one; [This word of address suggests that Arjuna is qualified to receive the Lord's instruction.] dvividha, two kinds of ; nistha, steadfastness, persistence in what is undertaken; asmin loke, in this world, for the people of the three castes who are qualified for following the scriptures; prokta, were spoken of; maya, by Me, the omniscient God, who had revealed for them the traditional teachings of the Vedas, which are the means of securing prosperity and the highest Goal; pura, in the days of yore, in the beginning the creation, after having brought into being the creatures.

Now then, which is that steadfastness of two kinds? In answer the Lord says: The steadfastness jnanayogena, through the Yoga of Knowledge-Knowledge itself being the Yoga [Here jnana, Knowledge, refers to the knowledge of the supreme Reality, and Yoga is used in the derivative sense of 'that (Knowledge) through which one gets united with Brahman'.]; had been stated sankhyanam, for the men of realization-those possessed of the Knowledge arising from the discrimination with regard to the Self and the not-Self, those who have espoused monasticism from the stage of Celibacy; itself, those to whom the entity presented by the Vedantic knowledge has become fully ascertained (see Mu. 3.2.6)-,the monks who are known as the parama-hamsas, those who are established in Brahman alone. And the steadfastness karma-yogena, through the Yoga of Action-action itself being the Yoga [Yoga here means 'that through which one gets united with, comes to have, prosperity', i.e. such actions as go by the name of righteousness and are prescribed by the scriptures.] had been stated yoginam, for the yogis, the men of action (rites and duties). This is the idea.

Again, had it been intended or stated or if it will be stated in the Gita by the Lord-and if it has also been so stated in the Vedas-that Knowledge and action are to be practised in combination by one and the same person for attaining the same human Goal, why then should He here tell His dear

suppliant Arjuna, that steadfastness in either Knowledge or action is to be practised only by different persons who are respectively qualified? If, on the other hand, it be supposed that the Lord's idea is, 'After hearing about both Knowledge and action, Arjuna will himself practise them (in combination); but, to others, I shall speak of them as being meant to be pursued by different persons', then the Lord would be imagined to be unreliable, being possessed of likes and dislikes! And that is untenable.

So, from no point of view whatsoever can there be a combination of Knowledge and action. And what has been said by Arjuna regarding superiority of Wisdom over action, that stands confirmed for not having been refuted; and (it also stands confirmed) that steadfastness in Knowledge is suitable for being practised by monks alone. And from the statement that they (Knowledge and action) are to be followed by different persons, it is understood that this has the Lord's approval.

Noticing that Arjuna had become dejected under the impression, 'You are urging me to that very action which is a source of bondage', and was thinking thus, 'I shall not undertake action', the Lord said, 'Na karmanam anarambhat, not by abstaining from action,' etc.

Or:-When steadfastness in Knowledge and steadfastness in action become incapable of being pursued simultaneously by one and the same person owing to mutual contradiction, then, since it may be concluded that they become the cause of attaining the human Goal independently of each other, therefore, in order to show-that the steadfastness in action is a means to the human Goal, not independently, but by virtue of being instrumental in securing steadfastness in Knowledge; and that, on the other hand, steadfastness in Knowledge, having come into being through the means of steadfastness in action, leads to the human Goal independently without anticipating anything else-,the Lord said:

3.4 A person does not attain freedom from action by abstaining from action; nor does he attain fulfilment merely through renunciation.

Purusah, a person; na does not; asnute, attain; naiskarmyam, freedom from action, the state of being free from action, steadfastness in the Yoga of Knowledge, i.e. the state of abiding in one's own Self which is free from action; anarambhat, by abstaining; karmanam, from actions-by the non-performance of actions such as sacrifices etc. which are or were performed in the present or past lives, which are the causes of the purification of the mind by way of attenuating the sins incurred, and which, by being the cause of that (purification), become the source of steadfastness in Knowledge through the generation of Knowledge, as stated in the Smṛti (text), 'Knowledge arises in a person from the attenuation of sinful acts' [the whole verse is:

Jñānam utpadyate pumsamksayatpapasya karmanah;

Yathādarsataprakhye pasyatyātmanamatmani.

'Knowledge arises....acts. One sees the Self in oneself as does one (see oneself) in a cleaned surface of a mirror'.-Tr.] (Mbh. Sa. 204.8). This is the import.

From the statement that one does not attain freedom from action by abstaining from actions, it may be concluded that one attains freedom from action by following the opposite course of performing actions. What, again, is the reason that one does not attain freedom from action by abstaining from actions? The answer is: Because performing actions is itself a means to freedom from action. Indeed, there can be no attainment of an end without (its) means. And Karma-yoga is the means to the Yoga of Knowledge characterized by freedom from action, because it has been so established in the Upanisads and here as well. As for the Upanisads, it has been shown in the texts, 'The Brahmanas seek to know It through the study of the Vedas, sacrifices, (charity, and austerity consisting in a dispassionate enjoyment of sense-objects)' (Br. 4.4.22), etc. which deal with the means of



realizing the goal of Knowledge under discussion, viz the Realm of the Self, that the Yoga of Karma is a means to the Yoga of Knowledge . And even here (in the Gita), the Lord will established that, 'But, O mighty-armed one, renunciation is hard to attain without (Karma-)yoga' (5.6); 'By giving up attachment, the yogis undertake work....for the purification of themselves' (5.11); 'Sacrifice, charity and austerity are verily the purifiers of the wise' (18.5), etc.

Objection: Is it not that in such texts as-'Extending to all creatures immunity from fear' (Na. Par. 5.43), (one should take recourse to freedom from action)-, it is shown that attainment of freedom from action follows even from the renunciation of obligatory duties? And in the world, too, it is a better known fact that freedom from action follows abstention from actions. Hence also arises the question, 'Why should one who desires freedom from action undertake action?'

Reply: Therefore the Lord said: Na ca, nor; samadhi-gacchati, does he attain; siddhim, fulfilment steadfastness in the Yoga of Knowledge, characterized by freedom from action; sannyasanat eva, merely through renunciation-even from the mere renunciation of actions which is devoid of Knowledge.

What, again, is the reason that by the mere giving up of actions which is not accompanied with Knowledge, a person does not attain fulfilment in the form of freedom from actions? To this query seeking to know the cause, the Lord says:

3.5 Because, no one ever remains even for a moment without doing work. For all are made to work under compulsion by the gunas born of Nature.

Hi, because; na kascit, no one; jatu, ever; tisthati, remains; api, even; for so much time as a ksanam, moment; akarma-krt, without doing work. Why? Hi, for; sarvah, all creatures; karyate karma, are made to work; verily avasah, under compulsion; gunaih, by the gunas-sattva (goodness); rajas (activity), and tamas (mental darkness); prakrti-jaih, born of Nature. The word 'unenlightened' has to be added to the sentence, since the men of realization have been spoken of separately in, 'who is not distracted by the three gunas (qualities)' (14.23). For Karma-yoga is meant only for the unenlightened, nor for the men of Knowledge. Karma-yoga, on the other hand, is not pertinent for the men of Knowledge who, because of their not moving away from their own Self, are not shaken by the gunas. This has been explained similarly in, 'he who has known this One as indestructible' (2.21).

But, if one who is not a knower of the self does not perform prescribed action, then this is certainly bad. Hence the Lord says:

3.6 One, who after withdrawing the organs of action, sits mentally recollecting the objects of the senses, that one, of deluded mind, is called a hypocrite.

Yah, one who; samyamya, after withdrawing; karma-indriyani, the organs of action-hands etc.; aste, sits; manasa, mentally; smaran, recollecting, thinking; indriya-arthan, the objects of the senses; sah, that one; vimudha-atma, of deluded mind; ucyate, is called; mithya-acarah, a hypocrite, a sinful person.

3.7 But, O Arjuna, one who engages in Karma-yoga with the organs of action, controlling the organs with the mind and becoming unattached-that one excels.

Tu, but, on the other hand, O Arjuna; yah, one who is unenlightened and who is eligible for action; arabhate, engages in;-what does he engage in? the Lord says in answer-karma yogam, Karma-yoga; karma-indriyaih, with the organs of action, with speech, hands, etc.; niyamyā, controlling; indriyani, the sense-organs; manasa, with the mind; and becoming asaktah unattached; [Here Ast; adds 'phalabhisandhi-varjitah, free from hankering for results'.-Tr.] sah, that one; visisyate, excels the other one, the hypocrite.

This being so, therefore,

3.8 You perform the obligatory duties, for action is superior to inaction. And, through inaction, even the maintenance of your body will not be possible.

Tvam, you, O Arjuna; kuru, perform; niyatam, the obligatory; karma, duties, those daily obligatory duties (nitya-karmas) or which one is competent (according to the scriptures), and which are not heard of [although no result of daily obligatory duties is mentioned in the scriptures, still Sankaracarya holds that it is either heaven or purification of the heart, because something done must have its consequence.-Tr.] as productive of any result; hi, for, from the point of view of result; karma, action; is jayah, superior; akarmanah, to inaction, to non-performance (of duties). Why? Ca, and; akarmanah, through inaction; api, even; te sarira-yatra, the maintenance of your body; na prasiddhyet, will not be possible. Therefore, the distinction between action and in action is obvious in this world.

'And as regards your idea that action should not be undertaken because it leads to bondage-that too is wrong.' How?

3.9 This man becomes bound by actions other than that action meant for God. Without being attached, O son of Kunti, you perform actions for Him.

Ayam, this; lokah, man, the one who is eligible for action; karma-bandhanah, becomes bound by actions- the person who has karma as his bondage (bandhana) is karma-bandhanah-; anyatra, other than; that karmanah, action; yajnarthat, meant for Got not by that meant for God. According to the Vedic text, 'Sacrifice is verily Visnu' (Tai. Sam. 1.7.4), yajnah means God; whatever is done for Him is yajnartham.

Therefore, mukta-sangah, without being attached, being free from attachment to the results of actions; O son of Kunti, samacara, you perform; karma, actions; tadartham, for Him, for God.

An eligible person should engage in work for the following reason also:

3.10 In the days of yore, having created the beings together with the sacrifices, Prajapati said: 'By this you multiply. Let this be your yielder of coveted objects of desire.'

Pura, in the days of yore, in the beginning of creation; srstva, having created; prajah, the beings, the people of the three castes; saha-yajnah, together with the sacrifices; Prajapati, the creator of beings, uvaca, said; 'Anena, by this sacrifice; prasavisyadhvam, you multiply.' Prasava means origination, growth. 'You accomplish that. Esah astu, let this sacrifice be; vah, your; istakama-dhuk, yielder of coveted objects of desire.' That which yields (dhuk) coveted (ista) objects of desire (kama), particular results, is istakama-dhuk.

How?

3.11 'You nourish the gods with this. Let those gods nourish you. Nourishing one another, you shall attain the supreme Good.'

'Bhavayata, you nourish; devan, the gods, Indra and others; anena, with this sarifice. Let te devah, those gods; bhavayantu, nourish; vah, you-make you contented with rainfall etc. Thus bhavayantah, nourishing; parasparam, one another; avapsyatha, you shall attain; the param, supreme; sreyah, Good, called Liberation, through the attainment of Knowledge;' or, 'you shall attain heaven-which is meant by param 'sreyah.' [The param sreyah (supreme Good) will either mean liberation or heaven in accordance with aspirant's hankering for Liberation or enjoyment.]

Moreover,

3.12 'Being nourished by sacrifices, the gods will indeed give you the coveted enjoyments. He is certainly a thief who enjoys what have been given by them without offering (these) to them.'

'Yajna-bhavitah, being nourished, i.e. being satisfied, by sacrifices; devah, the gods; dasyante hi, will indeed give, will distribute; among vah, you; the istan, coveted; bhogan, enjoyments, such as wife, children and cattle. Sah, he; is eva, certainly; a stenah, thief, a stealer of the wealth of gods and others; yah, who; bhunkte, enjoys, gratifies only his own body and organs; with dattan, what enjoyable things have been given; taih, by them, by the gods; apradaya, without offering (these); ebhyah, to them, i.e. without repaying the debt [The three kinds of debt-to the gods, to the rsis (sage), and to the manes-are repaid by satisfying them through sacrifices, celibacy (including study of the Vedas, etc.), and procreation, respectively. Unless one repays these debts, he incurs sin.] to them.'

3.13 By becoming partakers of the remembrance of sacrifices, they become freed from all sins. But the unholy persons who cook for themselves, they incur sin.

Those again, who are yajna-sista-asinah, partakers of the remnants of sacrifices, who, after making offering to the gods and others, [The panca-maha-yajnas, five great offerings, which have to be made by every householder are offerings to gods, manes, humans, creatures and rsis (sages).] are habituated to eat the remnants (of those offerings), called nectar; they, santah, by being (so); mucyante, become freed; sarva-kilbisaih, from all sins-from those sins incurred through the five things [the five things are; oven, water-pot, cutting instruments, grinding machines and broom. A householder incurs sin by killing insects etc. with these things, knowingly or unknowingly. It is atoned by making the aforesaid five offerings.], viz oven etc., and also from those others incurred owing to injury etc. caused inadvertently. Tu, but; the papah, unholy persons, who are selfish; ye, who; pacanti, cook; atma-karanat, for themselves; te, they, being themselves sinful; bhunjate, incur; agham, sin.

For the following reasons also actions should be undertaken by an eligible person. Action is definitely the cause of the movement of the wheel of the world. How? This is being answered:

3.14 From food are born the creatures; the origin of food is from rainfall; rainfall originates from sacrifice; sacrifice has action as its origin.

It is a matter of direct perception that annat, from food, which is eaten and is transformed into blood and semen; bhavanti, are born; bhutani, the creatures. Anna-sambhavah, the origin of food; is parjanya, from rainfall. Parjanya, rainfall; bhavati, originates; from yajnat, from sacrifice. This accords with the Smṛti, 'The oblations properly poured into fire reaches the sun. From the sun comes rain, from rain comes food, and from the sun comes rain, from rain comes food, and from that the creatures' (Ma.Sm.3.76). (Here) sacrifice means its unique [Also termed as the unseen result (adrsta).-Tr.] result. And that sacrifice, i.e. the unique result, which arises (samudbhavah) from action (karma) undertaken by the priest and the sacrificer, is karma-samudbhavah; it has action for its origin.

3.15 Know that actin has the veda as its origin; the Vedas has the Immutable as its source. Hence, the all-pervading Veda is for ever based on sacrifice.

Again, [a different reading in place of this is: 'Tat ca vividham karma kuto jatamityaha, From where did those various kinds of action originate? In reply the Lord says...' Still another reading is: 'Tat ca karma brahmodbhavam iti aha, And the Lord says: That action has the Vedas as its origin.'-vide A.A., 1936, p. 116).

Astekar's reading is: Tat ca evam vidham karma kuto jatamityaha, And from where has this kind of action originated? The answers this.'-Tr.] viddhi, know; that karma, action; is brahmodbhavam, it has Brahma, the Veda, as its udbhavam, origin. [Here Ast. adds 'revealer'-Tr.] Further, Brahma, called the Veda, is aksara-samudbhavam, it has aksara, the Immutable, Brahman, the supreme Self, as its source. This is the meaning. Since the Veda came out, like the breath of a man, from the supreme Self Itself, called the Immutable, therefore the Veda, being the revealer of everything, is sarva-gatam, all pervading. Even though all-pervading, the Veda is nityam, for ever; pratisthitam, based; yajne, on sacrifice, because the injunctions about sacrifices predominate in it.

3.16 O Partha, he lives in vain who does not follow here the wheel thus set in motion, whose life is sinful, and who indulges in the senses.



O Partha, sah, he; jivati, lives; mogham, in vain; yah, who, though competent for action; na anuvartayati, does not follow; iha, here, in the world; cakram, the wheel of the world; evam, thus; pravartitam, set in motion, by God, on the basis of the Vedas and the sacrifices; aghayuh, whose life (ayuh) is sinful (agham), i.e. whose life is vile; and indriya-aramah, who indulges in the senses—who has his arama, sport, enjoyment, with objects, indriyaih, through the senses.

Therefore, the gist of the topic under discussion is that action must be undertaken by one who is qualified (for action) but is unenlightened. In the verses beginning from, '(A person does not attain freedom from action by abstaining from action' (4) and ending with, 'You perform the obligatory duties....And, through inaction, even the maintenance of your body will not be possible' (8), it has been proved that before one attains fitness for steadfastness in the knowledge of the Self, it is the bounden duty of a person who is qualified for action, but is not enlightened, to undertake Karma-yoga for that purpose. And then, also in the verses commencing from '(This man becomes bound) by actions other than that action meant for God' (9) and ending with 'O Partha, he lives in vain,' many reasons [Such as, that it pleases God, secures the affection of the gods, and so on.] have been incidentally stated as to why a competent person has to undertake actions; and the evils arising from their non-performance have also been emphatically declared.

Such being the conclusion, the question arises whether the wheel thus set in motion should be followed by all, or only by one who is ignorant of the Self and has not attained to the steadfastness which is fit to be practised by the Sankhyas, the knowers of the Self, through the Yoga of Knowledge only, and which is acquired by one ignorant of the Self through the means of the practice of Karma-yoga mentioned above? Either anticipating Arjuna's question to this effect, or in order to make the meaning of the scripture

(Gita) clearly understood, the Lord, revealing out of His own accord that the following substance of the Upanisads-Becoming freed from false knowledge by knowing this very Self, the Brahmanas renounce what is a compulsory duty for those having false knowledge, viz, desire for sons, etc., and then lead a mendicant life just for the purpose of maintaining the body; they have no duty to perform other than steadfastness in the knowledge of the Self (cf. Br. 3.5.1)-has been presented here in the Gita, says:

3.17 But that man who rejoices only in the Self and is satisfied with the Self, and is contented only in the Self-for him there is no duty to perform.

Tu, but; that manavah, man, the sannyasin, the man of Knowledge, steadfast in the knowledge of the Self; yah, who; atmaratih eva syat, rejoices only in the Self-not in the sense objects; and atma-trptah, who is satisfied only with the Self-not with food and drink; and is santustah, contented; eva, only; atmani, in the Self; tasya, for him; na vidyate, there is no; karyam, duty [Duty with a view to securing Liberation.] to perform. [Rati, trpti and santosa, though synonymous, are used to indicate various types of pleasures. Or, rati means attachment to objects; trpti means happiness arising from contact with some particular object; and santosa means happiness in general, arising from the acquisition of some coveted object only.]

All people surely feel contented by acquiring an external thing. But this one, without depending on it, remains contented only with the Self; that is to say, he remains detached from everything. The idea is that, for a man who is such a knower of the Self, there is no duty to undertake.

3.18 For him there is no concern here at all with performing action; nor any (concern) with nonperformance. Moreover, for him there is no dependence on any object to serve any purpose.

Moreover, tasya, for him, who rejoices in the supreme Self; na, there is no; artham, concern; eva, at all; krtena, with performing action.

**Objection:** In that case, let there be some evil called sin owing to non-performance!

**Reply:** Iha, here, in this world; na, nor is there; for him kascana, any (concern); akrtena, with nonperformance. Certainly there is no evil in the form of incurring sin or in the form of self-destruction. Ca, moreover; asya, for him; na asti, there is no; kascit artha-vyapasrayah sarva-bhutesu, dependence on any object, from Brahma to an unmoving thing, to serve any purpose. Vyapasrayah is the same as vyapasrayanam, dependence, which is possible of being created by action prompted by necessity. (For him) there is no end to gain by depending on any particular object, due to which there can be some action for that purpose.

'You (Arjuna) are not established in this fullest realization which is comparable to a flood all around.'

3.19 Therefore, remaining unattached, always perform the obligatory duty, for, by performing (one's) duty without attachment, a person attains the Highest.

Since this is so, therefore, asaktah, remaining unattached; samacara, perform; satatam, always; karyam, the obligatory; daily karma, duty; hi, for; acarana, by performing; (one's) karma, duty; asaktah, without attachment, by doing work as a dedication to God; purusah, a person; apnoti, attains; param, the Highest, Liberation, through the purification of the mind. This is meaning.

And (you should perform your duty) for the following reason also:

3.20 For Janaka and others strove to attain Liberation through action itself. You ought to perform (your duties) keeping also in view the prevention of mankind from going astray.

Hi, for; in the olden days, the learned Ksatriyas, janakadayah, Janaka and others such as Asvapati; asthitah, strove to attain; samsiddim, Liberation; karmana eva, through action itself.

If it be that they were possessed of the fullest realization, then the meaning is that they remained established in Liberation while continuing, because of past momentum, to be associated with action itself-without renouncing it-with a view to preventing mankind from going astray. Again, if (it be that) Janaka and others had not attained fullest realization, then, they gradually became established in Liberation through action which is a means for the purification of the mind. The verse is to be explained thus.

On the other hand, if you think, 'Obligatory duty was performed even by Janaka and others of olden days who were surely unenlightened.

[Ajanadbhih: This is also translated as, 'surely because they were unenlightened'.-Tr.] Thereby it does not follow that action has to be undertaken by somebody else who has the fullest enlightenment and has reached his Goal', nevertheless, tvam, you, who are under the influence of past actions; arhasi, ought; kartum, to perform (your duties); sampasyan api, keeping also in view; loka-sangraham, [V.S.A gives the meanings of the phrase as 'the welfare of the world', and 'propitiation of mankind'.-Tr. ] the prevention of mankind from going astray; even that purpose.

By whom, and how, is mankind to be prevented from going astray? That is being stated: [In Ast. this introductory sentence is as follows: loka-samgrahah kimartham kartavyam iti ucyate.-Tr.]

3.21 Whatever a superior person does, another person does that very thing! Whatever he upholds as authority, an ordinary person follows that.

Yat yat, [This is according to the Ast. The G1. Pr. reads, yat yat yesu yesu.-Tr.] whatever action; a sresthah, superior person, a leader; acarati, does; itarah, another; janah, person, who follows him; does tat tat eva, that very action. Further, yat, whatever; sah, he, the superior person; kurute, upholds; as pramanam, authority, be it Vedic or secular; lokah, an ordinary person; anuvartate, follows; tat, that, i.e. he accepts that very thing as authoritative.

'If you have a doubt here with regard to the duty of preventing people from straying, then why do you not observe Me?'

3.22 In all the three worlds, O Partha, there is no duty whatsoever for Me (to fulfil); nothing remains unachieved or to be achieved. [According to S. the translation of this portion is: There is nothing unattained that should be attained.-Tr.] (Still) do I continue in action.

O Partha, na asti, there is no; kartavyam, duty; kincana, whatsoever; me, for Me (to fulfill); even trisu lokesu, in all the three worlds. Why? There is na anavaptam, nothing (that remains) unachieved; or avaptavyam, to be achieved. Still varte eva, do I continue; karmani, in action.

3.23 For, O Partha, if at any time I do not continue [Ast. and A.A. read varteya instead of varteyam.-Tr.] vigilantly in action, men will follow My path in every way.

Again, O Partha, yadi, if; jatu, at any time; aham, I; an, do not; varteyam, continue; atandritah, vigilantly, untiringly; karmani, in action; manusyah, men: anuvartante, will follow; mama, My; vartma, path; sarvasah, in every way, I being the Highest.

And if that be so, what is the harm? In reply the Lord says: [Ast. omits this sentence completely.-Tr.]

3.24 These worlds will be ruined if I do not perform action. And I shall become the agent of intermingling (of castes), and shall be destroying these beings.

Cet, if; aham, I; na kuryam, do not perform; karma, action; all ime, these; lokah, worlds; utsideyuh, will be ruined, owing to the obsence of work responsible for the maintenance of the worlds. Ca, and, futher; syam, I shall become; karta, the agent; sankarasya, of intermingling (of castes).

Consequently, upahanyam, I shall be destroying; imah, these; prajah, beings. That is to say, I who am engaged in helping the creatures, shall be destroying them. This would be unbefitting of Me, who am God.

'On the other, if, like Me, you or some one else possesses the conviction of having attained Perfection and is a knower of the Self, it is a duty of such a one, too, to help others even if there be no obligation on his own part.'

3.25 O scion of the Bharata dynasty, as the unlightened people act with attachment to work, so should the enlightened person act, without attachment, being desirous of the prevention of people from going astray.

O scion of the Bharata dynasty, yatha, as; some avidvamsah, unenlightened people; kurvanti, act. saktah, with attachment; karmani, to work, (thinking) 'The reward of this work will accrue to me'; tatha, so; should vidvan, the enlightened person, the knower of the Self; kuryat, act; asaktah, without attachment, remaining unattached. [Giving up the idea of agentship and the hankering for the rewards of actions to oneself.] Why does he (the enlightened person) act like him (the former)? Listen to that: Cikirsuh, being desirous of achieving; lokasamgraham, prevention of people from going astray.

'Neither for Me who am a knower of the Self, nor for any other (knower of the Self) who wants thus prevent people from going astray, is there any duty apart from working for the welfare of the world. Hence, the following advice is being given to such a knower of the Self:'

3.26 The enlightened man should not create disturbance in the beliefs of the ignorant, who are attached to work. Working, while himself remaining deligen [Some translate yuktah as, 'in the right manner'. S. takes it in the sense of Yoga-yuktah, merged in yoga.-Tr.], he should make them do [Another reading is yojayet, meaning the same as josayet.-Tr.] all the duties.

Vidvan the enlightened man; na janayet, should not create; buddhi-bhedam, disturbance in the beliefs-disturbance in the firm belief, 'This has to be done; and the result of this action is to be reaped by me'; ajnanam, of the ignorant, of the non-discriminating one; karma-sanginam, who are attached to work. But what should he do? Himself samacaran, working, performing those very activities of the ignorant; yuktah, while remaining diligent; josayet, he should make them do; sarva-karmani, all the duties.

How does an unilluminated, ignorant person become attached to actions? In reply the Lord says:

3.27 While actions are being done in every way by the gunas (qualities) of Nature, one who is deluded by egoism thinks thus: 'I am the doer.'

Karmani kriyamanani, while actions, secular and scriptural, are being done; sarvasah, in every way; gunaih, by the gunas, (i.e.) by the modifications in the form of body and organs; (born) prakrteḥ, of Nature-Nature, (otherwise known as) Pradhana [Pradhana, Maya, the Power of God.], being the state of equilibrium of the three qualities of sattva, rajas and tamas; ahankara-vimudha-atma, one who is deluded by egoism; manyate, thinks; iti, thus; 'Aham karta, I am the doer.'

Ahankara is self-identification with the aggregate of body and organs. He whose atma, mind, is vimudham, deluded in diverse ways, by that (ahankara) is ahankara-vimudha-atma. He who imagines the characteristics of the body and organs to be his own, who has self-identification with the body and the organs, and who, through ignorance, believes the activities to be his own-, he thinks, 'I am the doer of those diverse activities.'

3.28 But, O mighty-armed one, the one who is a knower of the facts about the varieties of the gunas (qualities) and actions does not become attached, thinking thus: 'The organs rest (act) on the objects of the organs.'

Tu, but, on the other hand; he who is a knower, tattva-vit, a knower of the facts; knower of what kinds of facts?—guna-karma-vibhagayoh, about the varieties of the gunas and actions, i.e. a knower of the diversity of the gunas and the diversity of actions; [Guna-vibhaga means the products of Prakṛti which consists of the three gunas. They are the five subtle elements, mind, intellect, ego, five sensory organs, five motor organs and five objects (sound etc.) of the senses. Karma-vibhaga means the varieties of inter-actions among these.—Tr.] na sajjate, does not become attached; iti matva, thinking thus; 'Gunaḥ, the gunas in the form of organs;—not the Self-vartante, rest (act); gunesu, on the gunas in the form of objects of the organs.'



3.29 Those who are wholly deluded by the gunas of Nature become attached to the activities of the gunas. The knower of the All should not disturb those of dull intellect, who do not know the All.

Those again, guna-sammudhah, who are wholly deluded by the gunas; prakrteh, of Nature; sajjante, become attached; guna karmasu, to the activities of the gunas, thining, 'We do actions for results.' Krtsna-vit, the knower of the All, one who is himself a knower of the Self; na vicalayet, should not disturb; tan, those who are attached to actions; (who are) mandan, of dull intellect; akrtsnavidah, who do not know the All, who are all attention on the results of actions. Unsetting of beliefs is itself the disturbance. That he should not do. This is the idea.

Again, in what manner should duties be under-taken by a seeker after Liberation who is not enlightened, who is qualified for actions (rites and duties)? As to this, the answer is being stated:

3.30 Devoid of the fever of the soul, engage in battle by dedicating all actions to Me, with (your) mind intent on the Self, and becoming free from expectations and egoism.

Vigata-jyarah, devoid of the fever of the soul, i.e. being free from repentance, without remorse; yuddhyasva, engage in battle; sannyasya, by dedicating; sarvani, all; karmani, actions; mayi, to Me, who am Vasudeva, the omniscient supreme Lord, the Self of all; adhyatma-cetasa, with (your) mind intent on the Self-with discriminating wisdom, with this idea, 'I am an agent, and I work for God as a servant'; and further, bhutva, becoming; nirasih, free from expectations ['Free from expectations of results for yourself']; and nirmamah, free from egoism. You from whom has vanished the idea, '(this is) mine', are nirmamah.

3.31 Those men who ever follow this teaching of Mine with faith and without cavil, they also become freed from actions.

Ye, those; manavah, men; who (nityam, ever;) anutisthanti, follow accordingly; me matam, My teaching- this teaching of Mine, viz that 'duty must be performed', which has been stated with valid reasoning; sraddhavantah, with faith; and anasuyantah, without cavil, without detracting Me, Vasudeva, the Teacher [Here Ast. adds 'parama, supreme'-Tr.]; te api, they also, who are such; mucyante, become freed; karmabhih, from actions called the righteous and the unrighteous.

3.32 But those who, decaying [Finding fault where there is none.] this, do not follow My teaching, know them-who are deluded about all knowledge [Knowledge concerning the qualified and the un-qualified Brahman.] and who are devoid of discrimination-to have gone to ruin.

Tu, but; ye, those who are the opposite of them (the former); who abhyasuyantah, decaying; etat, this instruction of Mine; na, do not; anutisthanti, follow; me, My; matam, teaching, they are deluded in various ways with respect to all knowledge. Viddhi, know; tan, them; sarva-jnana-vimudhan, who are deluded about off knowledge; acetasah, who are devoid of discrimination; nastan, to have gone to ruin.

'For what reason, again, do they not follow your teachings, perform duties that are not theirs and not follow their own duties? How is it that by remaining opposed to You, they do not fear the evil which will arise from transgressing Your commandments? As to that, the Lord says:

3.33 Even a man of wisdom behaves according to his own nature. Being follow (their) nature. What can restraint do?

Api, even; jnanavan, a man of wisdom-what to speak of a fool!; cestate, behaves; Sadrsam, according to;-what? svasyah, his own; prakrteh, nature. Nature means the impressions of virtue, vice, etc. [Also, knowledge, desires, and so on.] acquired in the past (lives) and which become manifest at the commencement of the present life. All creatures (behave) according to that only. Therefore, bhutani, beings; yanti, follow; (their) prakrtim, nature. Nigraha kim karisyati, what can restraint do, be it from Me or anybody else?

If all beings behave only according to their own nature-and there is none without his nature-, then, since there arises the contingency of the scriptures becoming purposeless owing to the absence of any scope for personal effort, therefore the following is being stated:

3.34 Attraction and repulsion are ordained with regard to the objects of all the organs. One should not come under the sway of these two, because they are his adversaries.

Raga-dvesau, attraction and repulsion, in the following manner-attraction towards desirable things, and repulsion against undesirable things; (vyavasthitau, are ordained,) are sure to occur, arthe, with regard to objects such as sound etc.; indriyasya indriyasya, of all the organs, with regard to each of the organs.

As to that, the scope of personal effort and scriptural purpose are being stated as follows: One who is engaged in the subject-matter of the scriptures should, in the very beginning, not come under the influence of love and hatred. For, that which is the nature of a person impels him to his actions, verily under the influence of love and hatred. And then follow the rejection of one's own duty and the undertaking of somebody else's duty. On the other hand, when a person controls love and hatred with the help of their opposites [Ignorance, the cause of love and hatred, has discrimination as its opposite.], then he becomes mindful only of the scriptural teachings; he ceases to be led by his nature.

Therefore, na agacchet, one should not come; vasam, under the sway; tayoh, of these two, of love and hatred; hi because; tau, they; are asya, his, this person's pari-panthinau, adversaries, who, like robbers, put obstacles on his way to Liberation. This is the meaning.

In this world, one impelled by love and hatred misinterprets even the teaching of the scriptures, and thinks that somebody else's duty, too, has to be undertaken just because it is a duty! That is wrong:

3.35 One's own duty [Customary or scripturally ordained observances of different castes and sects.-Tr.], though defective, is superior to another's duty well-performed. Death is better while engaged in one's own duty; another's duty is fraught with fear.

Svadharmah, one's own duty; being practised even though vigunah, defective, deficient; is sreyaṇ, superior to, more commendable than; para-dharmat, another's duty; though svanuṣṭhitat, well-performed, meritoriously performed. Even nidhanam, death; is sreyaḥ, better; while engaged svadharme, in one's own duty, as compared with remaining alive while engaged in somebody else's duty. Why? Paradharmah, another's duty; is bhayaṇ, fraught with fear, since it invites dangers such as hell etc.

Although the root cause of evil was stated in, 'In the case of a person who dwells on objects' (2.62) and '.....because they (attraction and repulsion) are his adversaries' (34), that was presented desultorily and vaguely. Wishing to know it briefly and definitely as, 'This is thus, to be sure', Arjuna, with the idea, 'When this indeed becomes known, I shall make effort for its eradication', said:

***Arjuna said:***

3.36 Now then, O scion of the Vrsni dynasty (Kṛṣṇa), impelled by what does this man commit sin even against his wish, being constrained by force, as it were?

Atha, now then; varsneya, O scion of the Vrsni dynasty; being prayuktah, impelled; kena, by what acting as the cause; as a servant is by a king, does ayam, this; purusah, man; carati, commit; papam, sin, a sinful act; api, even; anicchana, against his wish, though not himself willing; niyojitah, being constrained; balat, by force; iva, as it were-as if by a king, which illustration has already been given?

The Lord (Bhaga-van) said: 'You hear about that enemy, the source of all evil, of which you ask-.'

'Bhaga is said to consist of all kinds of majesty, virtue, fame, beauty, detachment as well as Liberation [Liberation stands for its cause, Illumination.], (V.P.6.5.74). That Vasudeva, in whom reside for ever, unimpeded and in their fullness, the six qualities of majesty etc. and who has the knowledge of such subjects as creation etc., is called Bhaga-van. 'He is spoken of as Bhaga-van who is aware of creation and dissolution, gain and loss, [Gain and loss stand for future prosperity and adversity.] ignorance and Illumination of all beings' (ibid. 78).

***The Blessed Lord said:***

3.37 This desire, this anger, born of the quality of rajas, is a great devourer, a great sinner. Know this to be the enemy here.

Esah, this; kamah, desire, is the enemy of the whole world, because of which the creatures incur all evil. This desire when obstructed in any way turns into anger. Therefore, krodhah, anger, is also identical with this (desire). It is rajoguna-samudbhavah, born of the quality of rajas; or, it is the origin of the quality of rajas. For, when desire comes into being, it instigates a person by arousing rajas. People who are engaged in service etc., which are effects of rajas, and who are stricken with sorrow are heard to lament, 'I have been led to act by desire indeed!' It is mahaasanah, a great devourer, whose food is enormous. And hence, indeed, it is maha-papma, a great sinner. For a being commits sin when goaded by desire. Therefore, viddhi, know; enam, this desire; to be vairinam, the enemy; iha, here in this world.

With the help of examples the Lord explains how it is an enemy:

3.38 As fire is enveloped by smoke, as a mirror by dirt, and as a foetus remains enclosed in the womb, so in this shrouded by that.

Yatha, as; vahnih, fire, which is naturally bright; avriyate, is enveloped; dhumena, by smoke, which is born concomitantly (with fire) and is naturally dark; or as adarsah, a mirror; is covered malena, by dirt; ca, and; garbhah, a foetus; is avrtah, enclosed; ulbena, in the womb by the amnion; tatha, so; is idam, this; avrtam, shrouded; tena, by that.

Again, what is that which is indicated by the word idam (this), and which is covered by desire? The answer is:

3.39 O son of Kunti, Knowledge is covered by this constant enemy of the wise in the form of desire, which is an insatiable fire.

Jnanam, Knowledge; is avrtam, covered; etena, by this; nityavairina, constant enemy; jnaninah, of the wise. For the wise person knows even earlier, 'I am being induced by this into evil.' And he always [Both at the time when desire arises in him, and also when he is forced to act by it.] feels distressed. Therefore, it is the constant enemy of the wise but not of a fool. For the fool looks upon desire as a friend so long as hankering lasts. When sorrow comes as a consequence, he realizes, 'I have been driven into sorrow because of longings', but certainly not earlier. Therefore it is the constant enemy of the wise alone.

In what form? Kama-rupena, in the form of desire-tha which has wish itself as its expression is kama-rupa; in that form-; (and) duspurena, which is an insatiable; analena, fire. That which is difficult to satisfy is duspurah; and (derivatively) that which never has enough (alam) is analam.

Again, having what as its abode does desire, in the form of a viel over Knowledge, become the enemy of all? Since when the abode of an enemy is known, it is possible to easily slay the enemy, therefore the Lord says:

3.40 The organs, mind, and the intellect are said to be its abode. This one diversely deludes the embodied being by veiling Knowledge with the help of these.

Indriyani, the organs; manah, mind; and buddhih, the intellect; ucyate, are said to be; asya, its, desire's; adhisthanam, abode. Esah, this one, desire; vimohayati, diversely deludes; dehinam, the embodied being; avrtya, by veiling; jnanam, Knowledg; etaih, with the help of these, with the organs etc. which are its abodes. [The activities of the organs etc. are the media for the expression of desire. Desire covers the Knoweldge of the Self by stimulating these.]



3.41 Therefore, O scion of the Bharata dynasty, after first controlling the organs, renounce this one [A variant reading is, 'prajahi hi-enam, completely renounce this one'.-Tr.] which is sinful and a destroyer of learning and wisdom.

Since this is so, therefore, O scion of the Bharata dynasty, adau niyamyā, after first controlling; indriyani, the organs; prajahihi, renounce; enam, this one, the enemy under consideration; which is papmanam, sinful-which is desire that is accustomed to sinning; and jnana-vijnana-nasanam, a destroyer of learning and wisdom, jnana, learning, means knowledge about the Self etc. from the scriptures and a teacher. Vijnana, wisdom, means the full experience of that.

Renounce, i.e. discard, from yourself the destroyer of those two-learning and wisdom, which are the means to the achievement Liberation.

It has been said, 'After first controlling the organs, renounce desire the enemy'. As to that, by taking the support of what should one give up desire? This is being answered:

3.42 They say that the organs are superior (to the gross body); the mind is superior to the organs; but the intellect is superior to the mind. However, the one who is superior to the intellect is He.

The learned ones ahuh, say; that indriyani, the five [Five sense-organs: of vision, hearing, taste, smell and touch; five motor-organs: hands, feet, speech, and for excretion and generation-these latter five are also understood in the present context.] organs-ear etc., are parani, superior, to the external, gross and limited body, from the point of view of subtlety, inner position, pervasiveness, etc. So also, manah, the mind, having the nature of thinking and doubting; [Sankalpa: will, volition, intention, thought, reflection, imagination, etc. vikalpa:doubt, uncertainly, indecision, suspicion, error, etc.-V.S.A.] is param, superior; indriyebhyah, to the organs. Similarly, buddhih, the intellect, having the nature of determination; is para, superior; manasah, to the mind. And yah, the one who is innermost as compared with all the objects of perception ending with the intellect, and with regard to which Dweller in the body it has been said that desire, in association with its 'abodes' counting from the organs, deludes It by shrouding Knowledge; sah, that one; is tu, however; paratah, superior; buddheh, to the intellect- He, the supreme Self, is the witness of the intellect. [The portion, 'with regard to which Dweller...the supreme Self,' is translated from Ast. Which has the same reading here as the A.A. The G1. Pr. Makes the "abode"

counting from the organs' an adjective of 'the Dweller in the body', and omits the portion, 'is tu, however...buddheh, to the intellect'.-Tr.]

3.43 [The Ast, introduces this verse with, 'Tatah kim, what follows from that?'-Tr.] Understanding the Self thus [Understanding....thus:that desires can be conquered through the knowledge of the Self.] as superior to the intellect, and completely establishing (the Self) is spiritual absorption with the (help of) the mind, O mighty-armed one, vanquish the enemy in the form of desire, which is difficult to subdue.

Buddhva, understanding; atmanam, the Self; evam, thus; as param, superior; buddheh, to the intellect; and samstabhya, completely establishing; atmana, with the mind, i.e. establishing (the Self) fully in spiritual absorption with the help of your own purified mind; O mighty-armed one, jahi, vanquish; this satrum, enemy; kama-rupam, in the form of desire; which is durasadam, difficult to subdue-which can be got hold of with great difficulty, it being possessed of many inscrutable characteristics.

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## Chapter 4 - Jnana Yoga

Commentary by Sri Adi Sankaracharya, Translated by Swami Gambhirananda

This Yoga which has been spoken of in the preceding two chapters, and which is characterized by steadfastness in Knowledge associated with renunciation, can be achieved through Karma-yoga. The import of the Vedas, characterized by engagement in, and detachment from, action, culminates in it. And this very Yoga is sought to be taught by the Lord in the whole of the Gita. So, considering that the purport of the Vedas stands concluded, the Lord praises it by recounting how it was traditionally handed down:

### ***The Blessed Lord said:***

4.1 I imparted this imperishable Yoga to Vivasvan, Vivasvan taught this to Manu, and Manu transmitted this to Iksavaku.

In the beginning of creation, with a view to infusing vigour into the Ksatriyas who are the protectors of the world, ahimsa, I, proktavan, imparted; imam, this; avyayam, imperishable; yogam, Yoga, presented in the (preceding) two chapters; vivasvate, to Vivasvan, the Sun. Being endowed with this power of Yoga, they would be able to protect the Brahmana caste. The protection of the world becomes ensured when the Brahmanas and the Ksatriyas are protected.

It (this Yoga) is avyayam, imperishable, because its result is undecaying. For, the result-called Liberation-of this (Yoga), which is characterized by steadfastness in perfect Illumination, does not decay. And he, Vivasvan, praha, taught (this); manave, to Manu. Manu abravat, transmitted (this); iksvakave, to Iksvaku, his own son who was the first king. [First king of the Iksvaku dynasty, otherwise known as the Solar dynasty.]

4.2 The king-sages knew this (yoga) which was received thus in regular succession. That Yoga, O destroyer of foes, is now lost owing to a long lapse of time.

Rajarsayah, the king-sages, those who were kings and sages (at the same time); viduh, knew; imam, this Yoga; which was evam parampara-praptam, received thus through a regular succession of Ksatriyas. Sah, that; yogah, Yoga; nastah, is lost, has got its traditional line snapped; iha, now; mahata kalena, owing to a long lapse of time. parantapa, O destroyer of foes. By para are meant those against oneself. He who, like the sun, 'scorches' (tapayati) them by the 'rays' of the 'heat' of his prowess is parantapa, i.e. scorcher of antagonists.

Noticing that the Yoga has got lost by reaching people who are weak and have no control of their organs, and that the world has become associated with goals that do not lead to Liberation,

4.3 That ancient Yoga itself, which is this, has been taught to you by Me today, considering that you are My devotee and friend, For, this (Yoga) is a profound secret.

Sah, that; puratanah, ancient; yogah, Yoga; eva, itself; ayam, which is this; proktah, has been taught; te, to you; maya, by Me; adya, today; iti, considering that; asi, you are; me, My; bhaktah, devotee; ca sakha, and friend. Hi, for; etat, this Yoga, i.e. Knowledge; is a uttamam, profound; rahasyam, secret.

Lest someone should understand that the Lord has said something contradictory, therefore, in order to prevent that (doubt), as though raising a question,

**Arjuna said:**

4.4 Your birth was later, (whereas) the birth of Vivasvan was earlier. How am I to understand this that You instructed (him) in the beginning?

Bhavatah, Your; janma, was aparam, later, in the abode of Vasudeva; (whereas) the birth vivasvatah, of Visvasvan, the Sun; was param, earlier, in the beginning of creation. Therefore, katham, how; vijanyam, am I to understand; etat, this, as not inconsistent; iti, that; tvam, You, yourself; who proktavan, insturcted this Yoga; adau, in the beginning, are the same person who are now teaching me?

By way of demolishing the doubt of fools with regard to Vasudeva, that He has no God-hood and omniscience-to which very purpose was Arjuna's question-

***The Blessed Lord said:***

4.5 O Arjuna, many lives of Mine have passed, and so have yours. I know them all, (but) you know not, O scorcher of enemies!

O Arjuna, bahuni, many; janmani, lives; me, of Mine; vyatitani, have passed; tava ca, and so have yours. Aham, I; veda know; tani, them; sarvani, all; (but) tvam, you; va vetta, know not, due to your power of understanding being obstructed by righteousness, unrighteousness, etc. However, parantapa, O scorcher of foes; aham, I know, possessing as I do unobstructed power of knowledge, because by nature I am enternal, pure, enlightened and free.

'In that case, how, in spite of the absence of righteousness and unrighteousness, can there be any birth for You who are the eternal God?'

That is beng answered:

4.6 Though I am birthless, undecaying by nature, and the Lord of beings, (still) by subjugating My Prakriti, I take birth by means of My own Maya.

Api, san ajah, though I am birthless; and avyayatma, undecaying by nature, though I am naturally possessed of an undiminishing power of Knowledge; and so also api san, though; isvarah, the Lord, natural Ruler; bhutanam, of beings, from Brahma to a clump of grass; (still) adhithaya, by subjugating; svam, My own; prakrtim, Prakrti, the Maya of Visnu consisting of the three gunas, under whose; spell the whole world exists, and deluded by which one does not know one's own Self, Vasudeva;-by subjugating that Prakrti of Mine, sambhavami, I take birth, appear to become embodied, as though born; atma-mayaya, by means of My own Maya; but not in reality like an ordinary man.

It is being stated when and why that birth occurs:

4.7 O scion of the Bharata dynasty, whenever there is a decline one virtue and increase of vice, then do I manifest Myself.

O scion of the Bharata dynasty, yada yada hi, whenever; bhavati, there is; a glanih, decline, decrease; dharmasya, of virtue consisting of the duties of castes and stages of life of living beings, which are the means to achieving prosperity and Liberation; and abhyutthanam, increase, rise; adharmasya, of vice; tada, then; do aham, I; srjami, manifest; atmanam, Myself, through Maya.

Why?

4.8 For the protection of the pious, the destruction of the evil-doers, and establishing virtue, I manifest Myself in every age.

Paritranya, for the protection; sadhunam, of the pious, the followers of the virtuous path; vinasaya, for the destruction; duskrtam, of the evil-doers, of the sinful ones; and also dharmasamsthapanarthaya, for establishing virtue fully;-for that purpose, sambhavami, I manifest Myself; yuge yuge, in every age.

4.9 He who thus knows truly the divine birth and actions of Mine does not get rebirth after casting off the body. He attains Me, O Arjuna.

Yah, he who; evam, thus, as described; vetti, knows tattvatah, truly, as they are in reality; that divyam, divine, supernatural; janma, birth, which is a form of Maya; ca karma, and actions, such as protection of the pious, etc.; mama, of Mine; na eti, does not get; punarjanma, rebirth; tyaktva, after casting off; this deham, body. Sah, he; eti, attains, comes to; mam, Me-he gets Liberated, O Arjuna.

This path of Liberation has not been opened recently. What then? Even in earlier days-

4.10 Many who were devoid of attachment, fear and anger, who were absorbed in Me, who had taken refuge in Me, and were purified by the austerity of Knowledge, have attained My state.



Bahavah, many; vita-raga-bhaya-krodhah, who were devoid of attachment, fear and anger; manmayah, who were absorbed in Me, who were knowers of Brahman, who were seers of (their) identity with God; mam upasrithah, who had taken refuge only in Me, the supreme God, i.e. who were steadfast in Knowledge alone; and were putah, purified, who had become supremely sanctified; jnana-tapasa, by the austerity of Knowledge-Knowledge itself, about the supreme Reality, being the austerity; becoming sanctified by that austerity of Knowledge-; agatah, have attained; madbhavam, My state, Goodhood, Liberation.

The particular mention of 'the austerity of Knowledge' is to indicate that steadfastness in Knowledge does not depend on any other austerity.

'In that case, You have love and aversion, because of which You grant the state of identity with Yourself only to a few but not to others?'

The answer is:

4.11 According to the manner in which they approach Me, I favour them in that very manner. O son of Partha, human beings follow My path in every way.

Yatha, according to the manner in which, the purpose for which, seeking, whatever fruit; prapadyante, they approach; mam, Me; aham, I; bhajami, favour; tan, them; tatha eva, in that very manner, by granting that fruit. This is the idea. For they are not seekers of Liberation. It is certainly impossible for the same person to be a seeker of Liberation and, at the same time, a seeker of rewards (of actions).

Therefore, by granting fruits to those who hanker after fruits; by granting Knowledge to those who follow what has been stated (in the scriptures) and are seekers of Liberation, but do not hanker after rewards; and by granting Liberation to those who are men of wisdom and are monks aspiring for Liberation; and so also by removing the miseries of those who suffer- in these ways I favour them just according to the manner, in which they approach Me. This is the meaning. On the other hand, I do not favour anybody out of love or aversion, or out of delusion.

Under all circumstances, O son of Prtha, manusyah, human beings; anuvartante, follow; sarvasah, in every way; mama, My; vartma, path, [The paths characterized by Knowledge and by action (rites and duties).] the path of God who am omnipresent. By 'human beings' are meant those people who become engaged in their respective duties to which they are qualified according to the results they seek.

'If Your wish to be favourable is the same towards all creatures on account of the absence of the defects of love and aversion in You who are God, and You are there with Your capacity to grant all rewards, why then do not all, becoming desirous of Liberation, take refuge in You alone with the very knowledge that Vasudeva is everything?'

As to that, hear the reason for this:

4.12 Longing for the fruition of actions (of their rites and duties), they worship the gods here. For, in the human world, success from action comes quickly.

Kanksantah, longing for, praying for; siddim, fruition, fructification of the results; karmanam, of actions; yajante, they worship; iha, here, in this world; devatah, the gods, Indra, Fire and others- which accords with the Upanisadic text, 'While he who worships another god thinking, "He is one, and I am another," does not know. He is like an animal to the gods' (Br. 1.4.10). [This text points out that the reason for adoring other deities is the ignorance of the Self, which gives rise to the ideas of difference between the worshipped and the worshipper. As animals are beneficial to human beings, so also is the sacrificer to the gods, because through oblations he works for their pleasure!] Hi, for, in the case of those, indeed, who sacrifice to other gods and long for results; (siddhih, success; karmaja, from action;) bhavati, comes; kshipam, quickly; manuse-loke, in the human world, because the authority of the scriptures extends only over the human world.

By the specific statement, 'For, in the human world, success comes quickly,' the Lord shows that results of actions can accrue even in the other worlds. The difference lies in this that, in the human world eligibility for [Ast. and A.A. omit 'adhikara, eligibility for', and read karmani.-Tr.] actions is according to castes, stages of life, etc. The fruition of the results of those actions of persons who are eligible according to castes, stages of life, etc. comes quickly.

What is the reason for the rule that the competence for rites and duties according to castes, stages of life, etc. obtains only in the human world, but not in the other worlds?

Or:-It has been said, 'Human beings, having such divisions as castes, stages of life, etc., follow My path in every way.' For what reason, again, do they as a rule follow Your path alone, but not of others?

This is being answered:

4.13 The four castes have been created by Me through a classification of the gunas and duties. Even though I am the agent of that (act of classification), still know Me to be a non-agent and changeless.

Catur-varnyam-meaning the same as catvarah varnah, the four castes; srstam, have been created; maya, by Me who am God, which accords with such Vedic texts as, 'The Brahmanas were His face...' (Rg. 10.90.12); guna-karma-vibhagasah, through a classification of the gunas and duties. [A.G. writes: guna-vibhagena karma-vibhagah, classification of the duties, determined by the classification of the gunas.-Tr] By the gunas are meant sattva, rajas and tamas (see note under 2.45; also see Chapter 14).

As to that, the control of the mind and body, austerity, etc. are the duties of the Brahmanas, who are sattvika, i.e. have a predominance of the quality of sattva (purity, goodness, etc.). Courage, valour, etc. are the duties of the Ksatriyas, in whom sattva becomes secondary and rajas (passion, attachment, etc.) preponderates. Agriculture etc. are the duties of the Vaisya, in whom tamas (indolence, ignorance, etc.) is secondary and rajas is predominant. Service is the only duty of the Sudra, in whom rajas is secondary and tamas predominates (see chapters 14, 16,17 and 18). In this way, the four castes have been created by Me through a classification of the gunas and duties. This is the idea. And these four castes do not prevail in the other worlds. Hence the specification, 'in the human world'.

'Well, in that case, by virtues of Your being the agent of the acts of creation of the four castes,etc. You become subject to the consequence of those actions? Therefore you are not eternally free and the eternal Lord!'

This is being answered: Api, even though; I am kartaram, the agent; tasya, of that act, from the empirical standpoint of maya; still, from the highest standpoint, viddhi, know; mam, Me; to be akartaram, a non-agent; and therefore, also know Me to be avyayam, changeless, not subject to the cycle of births and deaths.

'In reality, however, I am not the agent of those actions of which you think I am the agent.'

Because-

4.14 Actions do not taint Me; for Me there is no hankering for the results of actions. One who knows Me thus, does not become bound by actions.

Because of the absence of egoism, those karmani, actions; na limpanti, do not taint; mam, Me, by becoming the originators of body etc. And me, for Me; na sprha, there is no hankering for the results of those actions. But in the case of transmigrating beings, who have self-identification in the form, 'I am the agent', and thirst for actions as also for their results, it is reasonable that actions should taint them. Owing to the absence of these, actions do not taint Me. Anyone else, too, yah, who; abhijanati, knows; mam, Me; iti, thus, as his own Self, and (knows), 'I am not an agent; I have no hankering for the results of actions'; sah, he; na badhyate, does not become bound; karmabhih, by actions. In his case also actions cease to be the originators of body etc. This is the import.

4.15 Having known thus, duties were performed even by the ancient seekers of Liberation. Therefore you undertake action itself as was performed earlier by the ancient ones.

Jnatva, having known; evam, thus, that 'I am not an agent; I have no desire for the results of actions'; karma, duties; krtam, were undertaken; api, even; purvaih, by the ancient; mumuksubhih, seekers of Liberation. Tasmāt, therefore; tvam, you; kuru, undertake; karma, action; eva, itself. You ought not to sit quietly, or even renounce. Therefore, you (undertake actions) because they were performed by the ancients as well-if you have no Self-knowledge, then (undertake actions) for self-purification; or, if you have Self-knowledge, then (undertake actions) in order to prevent people from going astray-, as were krtam, performed; purvataram, earlier; purvaih, by the ancient ones, Janaka and others; not actions as are undertaken in the present day. [This last portion of the sentence is translated by some as follows: You should not undertake actions which are done in the present manner (i.e. do not perform actions in the manner undertaken by people nowadays, which neither purifies the mind nor helps people). (See G1. Pr. p. 114.)

'If action has to be undertaken here, then I shall do so following Your instruction itself. What is the use of specifying that it was done earlier by the ancient ones?' 'The answer is: Because there is a great difficulty as regards actions.' How?

4.16 Even the intelligent are confounded as to what is action and what is inaction. I shall tell you of that action by knowing which you will become free from evil.



Kavayah api, even the intelligent; mohitah, are confounded in this subject of action etc.; iti atra, as to; kim karma, what is action; and kim akarma, what is inaction. Therefore, pravaksyami, I shall tell; te, you; of karma, action; akarma ca, as also of inaction; jnatva, by knowing; yat, which-action etc.; moksyase, you will become free: asubhat, from evil, from transmigration.

'And you should not think thus: What is called karma is the movement of the body etc. as are well-known in the world; and akarma, inaction, is not doing those, (i.e.) sitting quietly. What is there to understand (further) in that regard?' 'Why?' The answer is:

4.17 For there is something to be known even about action, and something to be known about prohibited action; and something has to be known about inaction. The true nature of action is inscrutable.

Hi, for; there is something boddhavyam, to be known; api, even; karmanah, about action enjoined by the scriptures; and there is certainly something to be known vikarmanah, about prohibited action; so, also, there is something to be known akarmanah, about inaction, about sitting quietly. (The words 'there is' are to be supplied in all the three cases.) Because gatih, the true nature, i.e. the essential nature; karmanah, of action-implicating karma etc., viz action, prohibited action and inaction; is gahana, inscrutable, hard to understand.

'What, again, is the essential nature of action etc. which has to be understood, and about which it was promised, "I shall tell you...." (16)?' This is being stated:

4.18 He who finds inaction in action, and action in inaction, he is the wise one [Possessed of the knowledge of Brahman] among men; he is engaged in yoga and is a performer of all actions!

Since engagement and non-engagement (in action) depend on an agent, therefore, yah, he who; pasyet, ie. pasyati, finds; akarma, inaction, absence of action; karmani, in action-karma means whatever is done, action in general; in tha action-; and yah, who; finds karma, action; akarmani, in inaction, in the absence of action; sah, he; is buddhiman, a wise one; manusyesu, among men. All dealings involving an act, accessories, etc. exist certainly on the plane of ignorance, [Both engagement and non-engagement presuppose agentship and an act of some kind. This, however, holds good on the plane of ignorance, but not on that of Self-realization.] only so long as one has not attained to the Reality. He is a yogi, yukta, engaged in yoga; and a krt-sna-karma-krt, performer of all actions. One who discriminates between action and inaction. One who discriminates between action and inaction is praised thus.

Objection: Well, what is meant by this contradictory statement, 'He who finds inaction in action', and 'action in inaction'? For action cannot become inaction, nor inaction action. That being so, how can a witness have (such) an incongruous perception?

Vedantin: Is it not that [Ast. reads na in place of nanu.-Tr.] to an ordinary foolish observer, that which is reality is inaction appears as action, and similarly, action itself as inaction? That being so, in order to show things as they are the Lord says, 'He who finds inaction in action', etc. Therefore there is no incongruity. Besides, the qualifications such as 'intelligent' etc. (thus) become logical. And by saying, 'there is something to be known', is implied the perception of things as they are. Moreover, freedom from evil cannot follow from an erroneous perception; whereas it has been said, 'by knowing which you will become free from evil'. Therefore, one account of action and inaction being perceived contrarily by the creatures, the Lord's utterance, 'he who finds inaction in action,' etc. is for dispelling their contrary perception.

Not that in the empirical plane inaction has action as its receptacle, like a plum in a bowl! Nor even has action inaction as its receptacle, because inaction is a negation of action. Therefore, action and inaction are actually perceived contrarily by the ordinary persons-like seeing water in a mirage, or silver in nacre.

Objection: Is it not that to every one action is action itself? Never is there an exception to this.

Vedantin: That is not so, because when a boat is moving, motionless trees on the bank appear to move in the opposite direction to a man on the boat; an absence of motion is noticed in distant moving things which are not near one's eyes. Similarly, here also occurs the contrary perceptions, viz seeing action in inaction under the idea, 'I am doing', [Ast. omits 'aham karomi iti, under the idea, "I am doing"'.-Tr.] and seeing, inaction in action,-because of which it is said, 'He who finds inaction in action,' etc. in order to eliminate them. As such, although this answer has been given more than once, still a man becomes repeatedly deluded under the influence of a totally opposite perception. And forgetting the truth that has been heard again and again, he repeatedly raises false issues and questions! And therefore, observing that the subject is difficult to understand, the Lord gives His answer again and again.

The absence of action in the Self-well-known from the Vedas, Smritis and logic, as stated in, '(It is said that) This is unmanifest; This is inconceivable' (2.25), 'Never is this One born, and never does It die' (2.20; Ka. 1.2.18), etc.- has been and will be spoken of. The contrary perception of action in that actionless Self, i.e. in inaction, is very deep-rooted, owing to which 'even the intelligent are confounded as to what is action and what is inaction.' And as a consequence of the superimposition of action pertaining to the body etc. on the Self, there arises such ideas as, 'I am an agent; this is my action; its result is to be enjoyed by me.' Similarly, with the idea, 'I shall remain quiet,

whereby I shall be free from exertion, free from activity, and happy', and superimposing on the Self the cessation of activities pertaining to the body and organs and the resulting happiness, a man imagines, 'I shall not do anything; I shall sit quietly and happily.'

That being so, the Lord says, 'he who finds inaction in action,' etc. with a view to removing this contrary understanding of man. And here in this world, though action belonging to the body and organs continues to be action, still it is superimposed by everyone on the actionless, unchanging Self, as a result of which even a learned person thinks, 'I act.'

Therefore, in action (karmani), which is universally considered by all people to be inherent in the Self, like the perception of motion in the (stationary) trees on the bank of a river-(in that action) he who contrariwise finds the fact of inaction, like perceiving absence of motion in those trees-.

And, in inaction (akarmani) in the cessation of the activities pertaining to the body and organs and ascribed to the Self in the same way that actions are ascribed-, in that action, he who sees action because of egoism being implicit in the idea, 'I am happily seated quietly, without doing anything'-; he who knows thus the distinction between action and inaction, is wise, is learned among men; he is engaged in yoga, he is a yogi, and a performer of all actions. And he, freed from evil, attains fulfilment. This is the meaning.

This verse is interpreted by some in another way.

How?

(Thus:) 'Since the daily obligatory duties (nityakarmas) certainly have no results when performed as a dedication to God, therefore, in a secondary sense, they are said to be inaction. Again, the non-performance of these (nitya-karmas) is inaction; since this produces an evil result, therefore it is called action, verily in a figurative sense. That being so, he who sees inaction in the daily obligatory duties (nitya-karmas) owing to the absence

of their results-in the same way as a cow that does not yield milk is said to be not a cow, though in reality it is so-so also, in the non-performance of the daily obligatory duties, i.e. in inaction, he who sees action since that yields results such as hell etc....'

This explanation is not logical, because freedom from evil as a result of such knowledge is unreasonable, and the utterance of the Lord in the sentence, '....by knowing which you will become freed from evil', will be contradicted.

How?

Even if it be that liberation from evil follows from the performance of nitya-karmas, it cannot, however, follow from the knowledge of the absence of their results. For it has not been enjoined (anywhere) that knowledge of the nityakarmas (themselves), leads to the result of freedom from evil. Nor has this been stated here by the Lord Himself.

Hereby is refuted the 'seeing of action in inaction' [As explained by others.- Tr.], for (according to the opponent) 'seeing of action in inaction' has not been enjoined here [Here, in the present verse.] as a duty, but (what has been enjoined is) merely that performance of the nityakarmas is obligatory. Moreover, no result can accrue from the knowledge that evil arises from non-performance of nityakarmas. Nor even has non-performance of nityakarmas. been enjoined as something that should be known. Besides, such results as freedom from evil, wisdom, engagement in yoga, and being a performer of all actions cannot reasonably follow from a false perception of action as inaction. Nor is this a eulogy of false perception. [The stated results accrue from correct knowledge, not from false perception; and correct knowledge alone is praise-worthy.] Indeed, false perception is itself an obvious form of evil! How can it bring about liberation from another evil? Surely, darkness does not become the remover of darkness!

Opponent: Well, the seeing of inaction in action, or the seeing of action in inaction-that is not a false perception.

Vadantin: What then?

Opponent: It is a figurative statement based on the existence or the non-existence of results.

Vedantin: Not so, because there is no such scriptural statement that something results from knowing action as inaction and inaction as action, even in a figurative sense. Besides, nothing particular is gained by rejecting what is heard of (in the scriptures) and imagining something that is not. Further, it was possible (for the Lord) to express in His own words that there is no result from the nityakarmas, and that by their non-performance one would have to go to hell. Under such circumstances, what was the need of the ambiguous statement, 'He who sees inaction in action,' etc., which is misleading to others?

This being the case, such an explanation by anyone will be clearly tantamount to imagining that statement of the Lord as meant for deluding people. Moreover, this subject-matter (performance of nityakarmas) is not something to be protected with mystifying words. It is not even logical to say that the subject-matter will become easy for comprehension if it is stated again and again through different words. For, the subject-matter that was stated more clearly in, 'Your right is for action alone' (2.47), does not need any repetition. And everywhere it is said that whatever is good and ought to be practised deserves to be understood; anything purposeless does not deserve to be known. Besides, neither is false knowledge worth acquiring nor is the semblance of an object presented by it worth knowing.

Nor even can any evil, which is an entity, arise from the non-performance of nityakarmas, which is a non-entity, for there is the statement, 'Of the unreal there is no being' (2.16), and (in the Upanisad) it has been pointed out, 'How

can existence originate from nonexistence?' (Ch. 4.2.2). Since emergence of the existent from the nonexistent has been denied, therefore anyone's assertion that the existent originates from the nonexistent will amount to saying that a non-entity becomes an entity, and an entity becomes a non-entity! And that is not rational because it runs counter to all the means of valid knowledge.

Further, the scriptures cannot enjoin fruitless actions, they being naturally painful; and it is illogical that what is painful should be done intentionally. Also, if it is admitted that falling into hell results from their non-performance (i.e. of the nityakarmas), then that too is surely a source of evil. In either case, whether one undertakes them or not, the scriptures will be imagined to be useless. And there will be a contradiction with your own standpoint when, after holding that the nityakarmas are fruitless, you assert that they lead to Liberation.

Therefore, the meaning of 'He who finds inaction in action,' etc. is just what stands out literally. And the verse has been explained by us accordingly.

The aforesaid perception of 'inaction in action,' etc. is being praised:

4.19 The wise call him learned whose actions are all devoid of desires and their thoughts, [Kama-sankalpa is variously translated as 'desires and purposes', 'plans and desires for results', 'hankering for desires', etc. But Sankarcarya shows sankalpa as the cause of kama. -Tr.] and whose actions have been burnt away by the fire of wisdom.

Budhah, the wise, the knowers of Brahman; ahuh, call; tam, him; panditam, learned, in the real sense; yasya, whose, of the one who perceives as stated above; samarambhah, actions-whatever are undertaken; are sarve, all; kama-sankalpa-varjitah, devoid of desires and the thoughts which are their (desires') causes (see 2.62)-i.e., (those actions) are performed as mere movements, without any selfish purpose: if they are performed by one (already) engaged in actions, then they are for preventing people from going astray, and if they are done by one who has withdrawn from actions, then they are merely for the maintenance of the body-; and jnanagni-dagdha-karmanam, whose actions have been burnt away by the fire of wisdom.

Finding inaction etc. in action etc. is jnana, wisdom; that itself is agnih, fire. He whose actions, karma, described as good and bad, have been dagdhani, burnt away by that fire of wisdom, is jnana-agni-dagdha-karma.

However, one who is a perceiver of 'inaction' etc. [Perceiver of inaction etc.: He who knows the truth about action and inaction as explained before.-Tr.] is free from actions owing to the very fact of his seeing 'inaction' etc. He is a monk, who acts merely for the purpose of maintaining the body. Being so, he does not engage in actions although he might have done so before the dawn of discrimination. He again who, having been engaged in actions under the influence of past tendencies, later on becomes endowed with the fullest Self-knowledge, he surely renounces (all) [Ast. adds this word sarva, all.-Tr.] actions along with their accessories as he does not find any purpose in activity. For some reason, if it becomes impossible to renounce actions and he, for the sake of preventing people from going astray, even remains engaged as before in actions-without attachment to those actions and their results because of the absence of any selfish purpose-, still he surely does nothing at all! His actions verily become 'inaction' because of having been burnt away by the fire of wisdom.



By way of pointing out this idea, the Lord says:

4.20 Having given up attachment to the results of action, he who is ever-contented, dependent on nothing, he really does not do anything even though engaged in action.

With the help of the above-mentioned wisdom, tyaktva, having given up the idea of agentship; and phala-asangam, attachment to the results of action; he who is nitya-trptah, ever-trptah, ever-contented, i.e. has no hankering for objects; and nirasrayah, dependent on nothing-. Asraya means that on which a person leans, desiring to achieve some human goal. The idea is that he is dependent of any support which may be a means of attaining some coveted seen or unseen result.

In reality, actions done by a man of Knowledge are certainly inactions, since he is endowed with the realization of the actionless Self. Actions together with their accessories must be relinquished by one who has become thus, because they have no end to serve. This being so, api, even though; he remains abhi-pravrttah, engaged as before; karmani, in actions-getting out of those (actions) being impossible-, either with the intention of preventing people from going astray or with a view to avoiding the censure of the wise people; sah, he; eva, really; na karoti, does not do; kincit, anything, because he is endued with the realization of the actionless Self. [From the subjective standpoint of the enlightened there are no actions, but ordinary people mistakenly think them to be actions, which in reality are a mere semblance of it.]

On the other hand, one who is the opposite of the above-mentioned one, (and) in whom, even before undertaking works, has dawned the realization of his identity with Brahman, the all-pervasive, inmost, actionless Self; who, being bereft of solicitation for desirable objects seen or unseen, has renounced actions along with their accessories, by virtue of seeing no purpose to be served by undertaking actions meant to secure some seen or unseen result, and makes effort only for the maintenance of the body, he, the monk steadfast in Knowledge, becomes free.

Hence, in order to express this idea the Lord says:

4.21 One who is without solicitation, who has the mind and organs under control, (and) is totally without possessions, he incurs no sin by performing actions merely for the (maintenance of the) body.

Nirasih, one who is without solicitation-one from whom asisah [Asih is a kind of desire that can be classed under prayer. (Some translate it as desire, hope.-Tr.)], solicitations, have departed; yata-citta-atma, who has the mind and organs under control-one by whom have been controlled (yatau) both the internal organ (citta) and the external aggregate of body and organs (atma); (and) is tyakta-sarva-parigraha, [Parigraha: receiving, accepting, possessions, belongings.-V.S.A] totally without possessions- one by whom have been renounced (tyaktah) all (sarvah) possessions (parigraha); na apnoti, he does not incur; kilbisam, sin, in the form of evil as also righteousness-to one aspiring for Liberation, even righteousness is surely an evil because it brings bondage-; [Here Ast. adds tasmat tabhyam mukto bhavati samsarat mukto bhavati ityarthah, therefore, he becomes free from both of them, i.e. he becomes liberated from transmigration.-Tr.] kurvan, by performing; karma, actions; kevalam, merely; sariram, for the purpose of maintaining the body-without the idea of agenship even with regard to these (actions).

Further, in the expression, 'kevalam sariram karma', do the words sariram karma mean 'actions done by the body' or 'actions merely for the purpose of maintaining the body? Again, what does it matter if by (the words) sariram karma is meant 'actions done by the body' or 'actions merely for the purpose of maintaining the body?

The answer is: If by sariram karma is meant actions done by the body, then it will amount to a contradiction [Contradiction of the scriptures.] when the Lord says, 'one does not incur sin by doing with his body any action meant for seen or unseen purposes, even though it be prohibited.' Even if the Lord were to say that 'one does not incur sin by doing with his body some scripturally sanctioned action intended to secure a seen or an unseen end', then there arises the contingency of His denying something (some evil) that has not come into being!

(Further,) from the specification, sariram karma kurvan (by doing actions with the body), and from the use of the word kevala (only), it will amount to saying that one incurs sin by performing actions, called righteous and unrighteous, which can be accomplished with the mind and speech and which come within the purview of injunction and prohibition. Even there, the statement that one incurs sin by performing enjoined actions through the mind and speech will involve a contradiction; even in the case of doing what is prohibited, it will amount to a mere purposeless restatement of a known fact.

On the other hand, when the sense conveyed by sariram karma is taken as actions merely for the purpose of maintaining the body, then the implication will be that he does not do any other work as can be accomplished physically, orally, or mentally, which are known from injunctions and prohibitions (of the scriptures) and which have in view seen or unseen results; while he appears to people to be working with those very body (speech) etc. merely for the purpose of maintaining the body, yet he does not incur sin by merely making movements of the body etc., because from the use of the word kevala, (merely) it follows that he is devoid of the sense of agentship implicit in the idea, 'I do.' Since there is no possibility of a person who has reached such a state incurring evil as suggest by the word sin, therefore he does not become subject to the evil of transmigration. That is to say, he certainly becomes free without any obstacle since he has all his actions burnt away by the fire of wisdom.

This verse is only a reiteration of the result of full illumination stated earlier. It becomes faultless by accepting the interpretation of sariram karma thus.

In the case of the monk who has renounced all possessions, since owning food etc. meant for the bare sustenance of the body is absent, therefore it becomes imperative to beg for alms etc. for the upkeep of the body. Under this circumstance, by way of pointing out the means of obtaining food etc.

for the maintenance of the body of a monk as permitted by the text, 'What comes unasked for, without forethought and spontaneously.....' [Unasked for: what comes before the monk gets ready for going out for alms; without forethought: alms that are not given with abuses, and have not fallen on the ground, but collected from five or seven houses without any plan; spontaneously: alms brought to one spontaneously by devoted people.] (Bo. Sm. 21. 8. 12) etc., the Lord says:

4.22 Remaining satisfied with what comes unasked for, having transcended the dualities, being free from spite, and equipoised under success and failure, he is not bound even by performing actions.

Yadrccha-labha-santustah, remaining satisfied with what comes unasked for-yadrccha-labha means coming to possess something without having prayed for it; feeling contented with that-. Dvandva-atitah, having transcended the dualities-one is said to be beyond dualities when his mind is not distressed even when afflicted by such opposites as heat and cold, etc.-. Vimatsarah, being free from spite, from the idea of enmity; and samah, equipoised; siddhau ca asiddhau, is success and failure, with regard to things that come unasked for-.

The monk who is such, who is equipoised, not delighted or sorrowful in getting or not getting food etc. for the sustenance of the body, who sees inaction etc. in action etc., who is ever poised in the realization of the Self as It is, who, with regard to the activities accomplished by the body etc. in the course of going about for alms etc. for the bare maintenance of the body, is ever clearly conscious of the fact, 'I certainly do not anything; the organs act on the objects of the organs' (see 5.8; 3.28), he, realizing the absence of agentship in the Self, certainly does not do any actions like going about for alms etc. But when, abserving similarly with common human behaviour, agentship is attributed to him by ordinary people, then he (apparently) becomes an agent with regard to such actions as moving about for alms etc. However, from the standpoint of his own realization which has arisen from the valid means of knowledge presented in the scriptures, he is surely not an agent.

He, to whom is thus ascribed agentship by others, na nibadhyate, is not bound; api, even; krtva, by performing such actions as moving about for alms merely for the maintenance of the body, because action which is a source of bondage has been burnt away along with its cause by the fire of wisdom. Thus, this is only a restatement of what has been said earlier.

When a person who has already started works becomes endowed with the realization of the identity of the Self with the actionless Brahman, then it follows that in the case of that man, who has experienced the absence of agentship, actions and purposes in the Self, actions become relinquished. But if this becomes impossible for some reason and he continues to be engaged in those actions as before, still he certainly does not do anything. This absence of action has been shown in the verse, 'Having given up attachment to the results of action....' (20).

Of that very person with regard to whom has been shown the absence of action-

4.23 Of the liberated person who has got rid of attachment, whose mind is fixed in Knowledge, actions undertaken for a sacrifice get totally destroyed.

Muktasya, of the liberated person who has become relieved of such bondages as righteousness and unrighteousness, etc.; gatasangasya, who has got rid of attachment, who has become detached from everything; jnana-avasthita-cetasah, whose mind is fixed in Knowledge only; his karma, actions; acaratah, undertaken; yajnaya, for a sacrifice, to accomplish a sacrifice [A.G. takes yajna to mean Visnu. So, yajnaya will mean 'for Visnu'. Sankaracarya also interprets this word similarly in 3.9.-Tr.]; praviliyate, gets destroyed; samagram, totally-saha (together) agrena (with its consequence, result). This is the meaning.

For what reason, again, does an action that is underway get destroyed totally without producing its result? This is being answered:

Because,



4.24 The ladle is Brahman [Some translate as 'Brahman is the ladle....,' etc.-Tr.], the oblations is Brahman, the offering is poured by Brahman in the fire of Brahman. Brahman alone is to be reached by him who has concentration on Brahman as the objective [As an object to be known and attained. (Some translate brahma-karma-samadhina as, 'by him who sees Brahman in action'.)]

Brahma-arpanam, the ladle is Brahman: The knower of Brahman perceives the instrument with which he offers oblation in the fire as Brahman Itself. He perceives it as not existing separately from the Self, as one sees the non-existence of silver in nacre. In this sense it is that Brahman Itself is the ladle-just as what appears as silver is only nacre. (The two words brahma and arpanam are not parts of a compound word, samasa.) The meaning is that, to a knower of Brahman, what is perceived in the world as ladle is Brahman Itself.

Similarly, brahma-havih, the oblations is Brahman: To him, what is seen as oblations is nothing but Brahman.

In the same way, brahma-agnau, (-this is a compound word-) in the fire of Brahman: The fire into which oblation is hutam, poured; brahmana, by Brahman, by the agent, is Brahman Itself. The meaning is that Brahman Itself is the agent (of the offering). That he makes the offering-the act of offering-, that is also Brahman. And the result that is gantavyam, to be reached by him; that also is brahma eva, surely Brahman.

Brahma-karma-samadhina, by him who has concentration on Brahman as the objective: Brahman Itself is the objective (karma); he who has concentration (samadhi) on That is brahma-karma-samdhih. The goal to be reached by him is Brahman alone.

Thus, even the action undertaken by one who desires to prevent mankind from going astray is in reality inaction, for it has been sublated by the realization of Brahman. This being so, in the case of the monk from whom action has dropped off, who has renounced all activity, viewing his Knowledge as a (kind of) sacrifice, too, becomes all the more justifiable from the point of view of praising full realization.

That is, whatever is well known as ladle etc. in the context of a sacrifice, all that, in the context of the Self, is Brahman Itself to one who has realized the supreme Truth. If not so, then, since all in Brahman, it would have been useless to specifically mention ladle etc. as Brahman. Therefore, all actions cease to exist for the man of realization who knows that Brahman Itself is all this. And this follows also from the absence (in him) of the idea of accessories. [See note on p.211.-Tr.] For the act called 'sacrifice' is not seen to exist without being in association with the idea of accessories. All such acts as Agnihotra etc. are associated with the ideas of such accessories as making an offering etc. to the particular gods who are revealed in the scriptures, and with the idea of agency as also desire for results. But they are not found bereft of the ideas of such distinctions as exist among action, accessories and results, or unassociated with the ideas of agency hankering for results.

This (apparent) (activity of the man of Knowledge), however, stands dissociated from the ideas of differences among the accessories like ladle etc., actions and results, which get destroyed by the Knowledge of Brahman. Hence, it is inaction to be sure.

And thus has it been shown in, 'He who finds inaction in action' (18), 'he really does not do anything even though engaged in action' (20), 'the organs act on the objects of the organs' (3.28), 'Remaining absorbed in the Self, the knower of Reality should think, "I certainly do not do anything"' (5.8), etc. While pointing out thus, the Lord demolishes in various places the ideas of differences among actions, accessories and results. And it is also seen in the case of rites such as Agnihotra undertaken for results (kamyas), that the Agnihotra etc. cease to be (kamyas) rites undertaken for selfish motives when the desire for their results is destroyed. Similarly, it is seen that actions done intentionally and unintentionally yield different results. So, here as well, in the case of one who has his ideas of distinctions among

accessories like ladle etc., actions and results eliminated by the knowledge of Brahman, even activities which are merely external movements amount to inaction. Hence it was said, 'gets totally destroyed.'

Here some say: That which is Brahman is the ladle etc. It is surely Brahman itself which exists in the five forms [Accessories that can be indicated by the five grammatical case-endings, viz Nominative, Objective, Instrumental, Dative and Locative. (As for instance, the sacrificer, oblation, ladle, sacrificial fire, and Brahman.-Tr.) of accessories such as the ladle etc. and it is itself which undertakes actions. There the ideas of ladle etc. are not eradicated, but the idea of Brahman is attributed to the ladle etc. as one does the ideas of Visnu etc. to images etc., or as one does the idea of Brahman to name etc.

Reply: True, this could have been so as well if the context were not meant for the praise of jñānāyajna (Knowledge considered as a sacrifice). Here, however, after presenting full realization as expressed by the word jñānāyajna, and the varieties of rites as referred to by the word yajna (sacrifice), Knowledge has been praised by the Lord in, 'Jñānāyajna (Knowledge considered as a sacrifice) is greater than sacrifices requiring materials' (33). And in the present context, this statement, 'the ladle is Brahman' etc., is capable of presenting Knowledge as a sacrifice; otherwise, since Brahman is everything, it will be purposeless to speak specially only of ladle etc. as Brahman. But those who maintain that one has to superimpose the idea of Brahman on the ladle etc., like superimposing the idea of Visnu and others on images etc. and of Brahman on name etc., for them the knowledge of Brahman stated (in the verse) cannot be the intended subject-matter dealt with here, because according to them ladle etc. are the (primary) objects of knowledge (in the context of the present verse).

Besides, knowledge in the form of superimposition of an idea cannot lead to Liberation as its result; and what is said here is, 'Brahman alone in to be realized by him'. Also, it is inconsistent to maintain that the result of Liberation can be achieved without full realization. And it goes against the context-the context being of full realization. This is supported by the fact that (the subject of ) full realization is introduced in the verse, 'He who finds inaction in action,' and at the end (of this chapter) the conclusion pertains to that very subject-matter. The chapter comes to a close by eulogizing full realization itself in, 'Jnana-yajna (Knowledge considered as a sacrifice) is greater than sacrifices requiring materials', 'Achieving Knowledge, one...attains supreme Peace,' (39) etc. That being so, it is unjustifiable to suddenly say out of context that one has to superimpose the idea of Brahman on the ladle etc. like the superimposition of the idea of Visnu on images. Therefore this verse bears the meaning just as it has been already explained.

As to that, after having presented Knowledge as a sacrifice, other sacrifices also are being mentioned now in, the verses beginning with, '(Other yogis undertake) sacrifice to gods alone,' etc., for eulogizing that Knowledge:

4.25 Other yogis undertake sacrifice to gods alone, Others offer the Self, as a sacrifice by the Self itself, in the fire of Brahman.

Apare, other; yoginah, yogis, ritualists; pari-upasate, undertake; yajnam, sacrifice; daivam, to gods; eva, alone. A sacrifice by which the gods are adored is daiva-yajna; they perform only that. This is the meaning.

Brahma-agnau, in the fire of Brahman: By the word brahman is meant That which is referred to in such sentences as, 'Brahman is Truth, knowledge and infinite' (Tai. 2.1), 'Knowledge, Bliss, Brahman' (Br. 3.9.28), 'the Brahman that is immediate and direct-the self that is within all' (Br.3.4.1), which is devoid of all worldly characteristics like hunger etc. and which is beyond all particular qualifications-as stated in, 'Not this, not this' (Br.4.4.22). That which is Brahman is the fire. [Brahman is called fire because, as reflected in wisdom, It burns away everything, i.e. ignorance, or because everything merges into It during dissolution (pralaya).] And it is spoken of as Brahmagni with a view to referring to It as that into which the offering is made.

In that fire of Brahman, apare, others, other knowers of Brahman; upajuhvati, offer; yajnam, the Self, which is referred to by the word yajna (sacrifice), it, having, been presented as a synonym of the Self;-that Self, which is a sacrifice, which is reality is verily the supreme Brahman, which is associated with such limiting adjuncts as the intellect etc., which is associated with all the qualities of the limiting adjuncts superimposed on it, and which is the oblation, (they offer) yajnena, by the Self itself as described above. The offering (of the Self) in that (Brahman) is nothing but the realization of that Self which is associated with the limiting adjuncts to be the supreme Brahman which is free from adjuncts. The monks, steadfast in the realization of the identity of Brahman and the Self, make that offering. This is the meaning.

Beginning with, 'The ladle is Brahman' etc., this sacrifice characterized as full realization is being included among such sacrifices as daiva-yajna etc. with a view to eulogizing it in the verses beginning with, 'O destroyer of enemies, jnana-yajna is greater than the sacrifices involving (sacrificial) materials'.

4.26 Others offer the organs, viz ear etc., in the fires of self-control. Others offer the objects, viz sound etc., in the fires of the organs.

Anye, others, other yogis; juhvati, offer; indriyani, the organs; viz srotradini, ear etc.; samyama-agnisu, in the fires of self-control. The plural (in fires) is used because self-control is possible in respect of each of the organs. Self-control itself is the fire. In that they make the offering, i.e. they practise control of the organs. anye, others; juhvati, offer; visayan, the objects; sabdadin, viz sound etc.; indriyagnisu, in the fires of the organs. The organs themselves are the fires. They make offerings in those fires with the organs of hearing etc. They consider the perception of objects not prohibited by the scriptures to be a sacrifice.

4.27 Others offer all the activities of the organs and the activities of the vital force into the fire of the yoga of self-control which has been lighted by Knowledge.

Further, *apare*, others; *juhvati*, offer, i.e. merge; *sarvani*, all; *indriya-karmani*, the activities of the organs; and also the *prana-karmani*, activities of the vital force- *prana* means the air in the body; they offer its activities such as contraction, expansion, etc; *atma-samyama yoga-agnau*, into the fire of the yoga of self-control-withdrawal (*samyama*) [*Samyama* consists of concentration, meditation, and Self-absorption. The idea conveyed by the verse is that by stopping all activities, they concentrate the mind on the Self.] into the Self (*atma*) is self-control (*atma-samyama*); that itself is the fire of yoga (*yoga-agni*); (they offer) into that fire; *jnana-dipite*, which has been lighted by Knowledge, made to blaze up by discriminating knowledge, as if lighted up by oil.

4.28 Similarly, others are performers of sacrifices through wealth, through austerity, through yoga, and through study and knowledge; others are ascetics with severe vows.



Tatha, similarly; apare, others; are dravya-yajnah, performers of sacrifices through wealth-those sacrificers who spend wealth (dravya) in holy places under the idea of performing sacrifices; tapo-yajnah, performers of sacrifices through austerity, men of austerity, to whom austerity is a sacrifice; [This is according to Ast.-Tr.] yogayajnah, performers of sacrifice through yoga-those to whom the yoga consisting in the control of the vital forces, withdrawal of the organs, etc., is a sacrifice; and svadhyaya-jnana-yajnah, performers of sacrifices through study and knowledge.

Sacrificers through study are those to whom the study of Rg-veda etc. according to rules is a sacrifice. And sacrificers through knowledge are those to whom proper understanding of the meaning of the scriptures is a sacrifice. Others are yatayah, ascetics, who are diligent; samsita-vratah, in following severe vows. Those whose vows (vratah) have been fully sharpened (samsita), made very rigid, are samsita-vratah. [Six kinds of sacrifices have been enumerated in this verse.]

Further,

4.29 Constantly practising control of the vital forces by stopping the movements of the outgoing and the incoming breaths, some offer as a sacrifice the outgoing breath in the incoming breath; while still others, the incoming breath in the outgoing breath.

Pranayama-parayanah, constantly practising control of the vital forces-i.e. they practise a form of pranayama called Kumbhaka (stopping the breath either inside or outside) [Three sorts of motion of Pranayama (control of the vital forces) are, one by which we draw the breath in, another by which we throw it out, and the third action is when the breath is held in the lungs or stopped from entering the lungs.'-C.W., Vol.I, 1962, p. 267.

Thus, there are two kinds of Kumbhaka-internal and external.]; prana-apanaga-  
ti ruddhva, by stopping the movements of the outgoing and the incoming  
breaths-the outgoing of breath (exhalation) through the mouth and the  
nostrils is the movement of the Prana; as opposed to that, the movement of  
Apana is the going down (of breath) (inhalation); these constitute the prana-  
apana-gati, movements of Prana and Apana; by stopping these; some  
juhvati, offer as a sacrifice; pranam, the outgoing breath, which is the  
function of Prana; apane, in the incoming breath, which is the function of  
Apana-i.e. they practised a form of pranayama called Puraka ('filling in');  
while tatha apare, still others; offer apanam, the incoming breath; prane, in  
the outgoing breath, i.e. they practise a form of pranayama called Recaka  
(emptying out'). [Constantly practising control of the vital, forces, they  
perform Kumbhaka after Recaka and Puraka.]

4.30 Others, having their food regulated, offer the vital forces in the vital forces. All of them are knowers of the sacrifice and have their sins destroyed by sacrifice.

Besides, apare, others; niyata-aharah, having their food regulated; juhvati, offer; pranana, the vital forces, the different kinds of vital forces; pranesu, in the vital forces themselves. Whichever function of the vital forces is brought under control, in it they offer the other functions. These latter become, as it were, merged in the former. Sarve api, all; of ete, them; yajna-vidah, are knowers of the sacrifice; and yajna-ksapita-kamasah, have their sins destroyed by the sacrifices as mentioned above.

After accomplishing the above-mentioned sacrifices,

4.31 Those who partake of the nectar left over after a sacrifice, reach the eternal Brahman. This world ceases to exist for one who does not perform sacrifices. What to speak of the other (world), O best among the Kurus (Arjuna)!

Yajna-sista-amrta-bhujah, those who partake of the nectar left over after a sacrifice, i.e. those who, after performing the sacrifices described above, eat, during the leisure after the sacrifice, the food called nectar, as prescribed by the injunctions; yanti, reach; sanatanam brahma, the eternal Brahman. For the sake of consistency (with the Upanisads) it is understood that if they (the sacrificers) are seekers of liberation, (then they reach Brahman) in due course of time. [The Upanisads describe the different stages through which those who do good deeds and practise meditation have to pass before reaching the qualified Brahman after death. For liberation there is need also of purification of the heart, Thus, they reach Brahman by stages, and not immediately after death. (See Ch. 8.5 and subsequent portion; also, Br. 4.3.35 to 4.4.25, etc.)]

Even ayam lokah, this world, common to all beings; na asti, ceases to exist; ayajnyasya, for one who does not perform sacrifices, for him who does not have to his credit even a single one of the above sacrifices. Kutah anyah, what to speak of the other world which can be achieved through special disciplines; kurusattama, O best among the Kurus!

4.32 Thus, various kinds of sacrifices lie spread at the mouth of the Vedas. Know them all to be born of action. Knowing thus, you will become liberated.

Evam, thus; bahu-vidha yajnah, various kinds of sacrifices as described; vitatah, lie spread; mukhe, at the mouth, at the door; brahmanah, of the Vedas. Those which are known through the Vedas- as for instance, 'We offer the vital force into speech', etc.-are said to be vitatah, spread, elaborated; mukhe, at the mouth; brahmanah, of the Vedas.

Viddhi, know; tan, them; sarvan, all; to be karmajan, born of action, accomplished through the activities of body, speech and mind, but not born of the Self. For the Self is actionless. Hence, jnatva, knowing; evam, thus; vimoksyase, you will become liberated from evil. By knowing thus- 'These are not my actions; I am actionless and detached'-You will be freed from worldly bondage as a result of this full enlightenment. This is the purport.

Through the verse beginning with, 'The ladle is Brahman' etc., complete Illumination has been represented as a sacrifice. And sacrifices of various kinds have been taught. With the help of [Some translate this as: As compared with....-Tr.] those (sacrifices) that are meant for accomplishing desirable human ends, Knowledge (considered as a sacrifice) is being extolled:

How?

4.33 O destroyer of enemies, Knowledge considered as a sacrifice is greater than sacrifices requiring materials. O son of Prtha, all actions in their totality culminate in Knowledge.

O destroyer of enemies, jnana-yajnah, Knowledge considered as a sacrifice; is sreyan, greater; dravyamayajnat, than sacrifices requiring materials [Including study of the Vedas, etc. also.] For, a sacrifice performed with materials is an originator of results, [Worldly prosperity, attaining heaven, etc.], but Knowledge considered as a sacrifice is not productive of results. [It only reveals the state of Liberation that is an achieved fact. (According to Advaitism, Liberation consists in the removal of ignorance by Illumination. Nothing new is produced thereby.-Tr.)]. Hence it is greater, more praiseworthy.

How?

Because, sarvam, all; karma-akhilam, actions in their totality, without exception; O son of Prtha, parisamapyate, culminate, get merged (attain their consummation); jnane, in Knowledge, which is a means to Liberation and is comparable to 'a flood all around' (cf.2.46). This is the idea, which accords with the Upanisadic text, 'As when the (face of a die) bearing the number 4, called Krta, wins, the other inferior (numbers on the die-faces) get included in it, so whatever good actions are performed by beings, all that gets merged in this one (Raikva). (So it happens) to anyone who knows what he (Raikva) knew' (Ch. 4.1.4).

In that case, by what means is this highly estimable Knowledge acquired?

The answer is being given:

4.34 Know that through prostration, inquiry and service. The wise ones who have realized the Truth will impart the Knowledge to you.

Viddhi, know; tat, that, the process by which It is acquired; by approaching teachers pranipatena, through prostration, by lying fully stretched on the ground with face downward, with prolonged salutation; pariprasnena, through inquiry, as to how bondage and Liberation come, and what are Knowledge and ignorance; and sevaya, through the service of the guru. (Know it) through these and other (disciplines) [Other disciplines such as control of the mind, body, etc. Sankaracarya's own words in the Commentary are evamadina, after which Ast. puts a full stop, and agreeing with this, A.G. says that the word viddhi (know) is to be connected with evamadina. Hence this translation. Alternatively, those words have to be taken with prasarayena. Then the meaning will be, 'Being pleased with such and other forms of humility....'-Tr.]. Being pleased with humility, jnaninah, the wise ones, the teachers; tattva-darsinah, who have realized the Truth; upadeksyanti, will impart, will tell; te, you; jnanam, the Knowledge as described above.

Although people may be wise, some of them are apt to know Truth just as it is, while others may not be so. Hence the qualification, 'who have realized the Truth'. The considered view of the Lord is that Knowledge imparted by those who have full enlightenment becomes effective, not any other.

That being so, the next verse also becomes appropriate:

4.35 Knowing which, O Pandava (Arjuna), you will not come under delusion again in this way, and through which you will see all beings without exception in the Self and also in Me.

Jnatva, knowing; yat, which-by acquiring which Knowledge imparted by them; O Pandava, na vasyasi, you will not come under; moham, delusion; punah, again; evam, in this way, in the way you have come under delusion now. Besides, yena, through which Knowledge; draksyasi, you will see directly; bhutani, all beings; asesena, without exception, counting from Brahma down to a clump of grass; atmani, in the Self, in the innermost Self, thus-'These beings exist in me' ; and atha, also; see that these are mayi. in Me, in Vasudeva, the supreme Lord. The purport is, 'You will realize the identity of the individual Self and God, which is well known in the Upanisads.'

Moreover, the greatness of this Knowledge is:

4.36 Even if you be the worst sinner among all sinners, still you will cross over all the wickedness with the raft of Knowledge alone.

Api cet asi, even if you be; papa-krt-tamah, the worst sinner, extremely sinful; sarvebhyah, among all; papebhyah, the sinners (papa, lit. sin, means here sinner) ; still santarisyasi, you will cross over; sarvam, all; the vrjinam, wickedness, the ocean of wickedness, sin; [Ast. reads papa-samudram, (ocean of sin) in place of papam.-Tr.] jnana-plavena eva, with the raft of Knowledge alone, by using Knowledge alone as a float. Here [Here, in the scriptures imparting spiritual instructions.], righteousness (formal religious observance), too, is said to be an evil in the case of one aspiring for Liberation.

How Knowledge destroys sin is being told with the help of an illustration:

4.37 O Arjuna, as a blazing fire reduces pieces of wood to ashes, similarly the fire of Knowledge reduces all actions to ashes.



O Arjuna, yatha, as; a samiddhah, blazing; agnih, fire, a well lighted fire; kurute, reduces; edhamasi, pieces of wood; bhasmasat, to ashes; tatha, similarly; jnanagnih, the fire of Knowledge-Knowledge itself being the fire; kurute, reduces; bhasmasat, to ashes; sarva-karmani, all actions, i.e. it renders them ineffective, for the fire of Knowledge itself cannot directly [Knowledge destroys ignorance, and thereby the idea of agentship is eradicated. This in turn makes actions impossible.] burn actions to ashes, like pieces of wood. So, the idea implied is that full enlightenment is the cause of making all actions impotent.

From the force the context [If the body were to die just with the dawn of Knowledge, imparting of Knowledge by enlightened persons would be impossible, and thus there would be no teacher to transmit Knowledge!] it follows that, since the result of actions owing to which the present body has been born has already become effective, therefore it gets exhausted only through experiencing it. Hence, Knowledge reduces to ashes only all those actions that were done (in this life) prior to the rise of Knowledge and that have not become effective, as also those performed along with (i.e. after the dawn of) Knowledge, and those that were done in the many past lives.

Since this is so, therefore,

4.38 Indeed, there is nothing purifying here comparable to Knowledge. One who has become perfected after a (long) time through yoga, realizes That by himself in his own heart.

Hi, indeed; na vidyate, there is nothing; pavitram, purifying, sanctifying; iha, here; sadrsam, comparable; jnanena, to Knowledge. Yoga-samsiddhah, one who has become perfected, who as attained fitness through yoga-the seeker after Liberation who has become samsiddhah, purified, qualified; yogena, through the yoga of Karma and the yoga of concentration-; kalena, after a long time; vindati, realizes, i.e. attains; tat, That, Knowledge; verily svayam, by himself; atmani, in his own heart.

That means by which Knowledge is invariably attained is being taught:

4.39 The man who has faith, is diligent and has control over the organs, attains Knowledge. Achieving Knowledge, one soon attains supreme Peace.

Sraddhavan, the man who has faith; labhate, attains; jnanam, Knowledge. Even when one has faith, he may be indolent. Therefore the Lord says, tatparah, who is diligent, steadfast in the service of the teacher, etc., which are the means of attaining Knowledge. Even when one has faith and is diligent, one may not have control over the organs. Hence the Lord says, samyata-indriyah, who has control over the organs-he whose organs (indriyani) have been withdrawn (samyata) from objects. He who is such, who is full of faith, diligent, and has control over the organs, does surely attain Knowledge.

However, prostrations etc., which are external, are not invariably fruitful, for there is scope for dissimulation faith etc. But this is not so in the case of one possessing faith etc. Hence they are the unfailing means of acquiring Knowledge.

What, again, will result from gaining Knowledge? This is being answered: Labdhva, achieving; jnanam, Knowledge; adhigacchati, one attains; acirena, soon indeed; param, supreme; santim, Peace, supreme detachment called Liberation. That Liberation soon follows from full Knowledge is a fact well ascertained from all the scriptures and reasoning.

One should not entertain any doubt in this matter. For doubt is the most vicious thing. Why? The answer is being stated:

4.40 One who is ignorant and faithless, and has a doubting mind perishes. Neither this world nor the next nor happiness exists for one who has a doubting mind.

Ajnah, one who is ignorant, who has not known the Self; and asradda-dhanah, who is faithless; [Ast. adds here: guruvakya-sastresu avisvasavan, who has no faith in the instructions of the teacher and the scriptures.-Tr.] and samsaya-atma, who has a doubting mind; vinasyati, perishes. Although the ignorant and the faithless get ruined, yet it is not to the extent that a man with a doubting mind does. As for one with a doubting mind, he is the most vicious of them all. How? Na ayam lokah, neither this world which is familiar; na, nor also; parah, the next world; na sukham, nor happiness; asti, exist; samsaya-atmanah, for one who has a doubting mind. For doubt is possible even with regard to them! Therefore one should not entertain doubt.

Why?

4.41 O Dhananjaya (Arjuna), actions do not bind one who has renounced actions through yoga, whose doubt has been fully dispelled by Knowledge, and who is not inadvertent.

Yoga-sannyasta-karmanam, one who has renounced actions through yoga: that person who is a knower of the supreme Goal, by whom actions called righteous or unrighteous have been renounced through the yoga characterized as the Knowledge of the supreme Goal.

How does one become detached from actions through yoga? The Lord says: He is jnana-samchinna-samsayah, one whose doubts (samsaya) have been fully dispelled (samchinna) by Knowledge (jnana) characterized as the realization of the identity of the individual Self and God.

O Dhananjaya, he who has thus renounced actions through yoga, atmavantam, who is not inadvertent, not careless; him, karmani, actions, seen as the activities of the gunas (see 3.28); na nibadhnanti, do not bind, (i.e.) they do not produce a result in the form of evil etc.

Since one whose doubts have been destroyed by Knowledge-arising from the destruction of the impurities (of body, mind, etc.) as result of the practise of Karma-yoga-does not get bound by actions owing to the mere fact of his actions having been burnt away by Knowledge; and since one who has doubts with regard to the practice of the yogas of Knowledge and actions gets ruined-

4.42 Therefore, O scion of the Bharata dynasty, take recourse to yoga and rise up, cutting asunder with the sword of Knowledge this doubt of your own in the heart, arising from ignorance.

Tasmat, therefore, O scion of the Bharata dynasty; atistha, take recourse to, i.e. undertake; yogam, yoga -performance of actions, which is a means to full Illumination; and now, uttistha, rise up for battle; chittva, cutting asunder; jnanasina, with the sword of Knowledge-Knowledge is full Illumination, which is a destroyer of such defects as sorrows, delusion, etc.; that itself is the sword; with that sword of Knowledge;enam, this; samsayam, doubt; atmanah, of your own, which is a source of one's own ruin and is most sinful; hrtstham, in the heart, residing in the intellect; ajnana-sambhutam, arising from ignorance, born of non-discrimination.

The word atmanah is used because doubt concerns oneself. Indeed, another's doubt cannot be removed by someone else. Hence the word 'own' is used. So, although the doubt is with regard to the Self, it is really one's own.

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## **Chapter 5 - The Path Of Renunciation Of Actions**

Commentary by Sri Adi Sankaracharya, Translated by Swami Gambhirananda



In the instructions beginning with 'He who finds inaction in action' (4.18), and in, 'he is engaged in yoga and is a performer, of all actions' (ibid.), 'whose actions have been burnt away by the fire of wisdom' (ibid. 19), 'performing actions merely for the (maintenance of the ) body' (ibid. 21), 'Remaining satisfied with what comes unasked for' (ibid. 22), 'The ladle is Brahman, the oblation is Brahman' (ibid. 24), 'Know them all to be born of action' (ibid. 32), 'O son of Prtha, all actions in their totality culminate in Knowledge' (ibid. 33), 'the fire of Knowledge reduces all actions to ashes' (ibid. 37) ending with 'actions do not bind one who has renounced actions through yoga' (ibid. 41), the Lord spoke of renunciation of all actions. And in the words, 'take recourse to yoga by cutting asunder with the sword of Knowledge this doubt' (ibid. 42), the Lord has said, 'You undertake yoga consisting in the performance of actions'.

Between these two, viz the performance of actions and renunciation of actions, since there is mutual opposition as between rest and motion, therefore it is not possible for the same person to undertake them together. Nor has it been enjoined that they should be practised at different times. That is to say, should be practised at different times. That is to say, there arises the contingency of having to undertake one of these as a duty. In such a case the one which is more commendable of these two, viz performance of actions and relinquishment of actions, ought to be undertaken, not the other.

Thinking thus and with a view to knowing the one that is more commendable, Arjuna said, 'O Krsna, You speak of renunciation of actions,' etc.

**Objection:** Is it not that in the verses quoted above, the Lord, intent on

elaborating steadfastness in Knowledge, spoke of renunciation of all actions for a knower of the Self, but not for one ignorant of the Self? And consequently, since performance of actions and their renunciation are meant for different persons, therefore the question with a view to knowing the preference of one over the other does not become logical.

**Reply:** It is true that from your point of view the question is not rational. We say, that, on the other hand, the question is certainly justifiable from the questioner's (Arjuna's) standpoint.

**Objection:** How?

**Reply:** In the foregoing passages the emphasis is on the renunciation of actions (not on the agent), because it was intended by the Lord to present that as a duty. But it is impossible to undertake that (renunciation) as a duty unless there is an agent to do so. Therefore, from one point of view, even he who has not realized the Self becomes approved as fit for renunciation. On the other hand, it is not intended that renunciation has to be undertaken only by a knower of the Self.

To Arjuna, who thus thinks that even an ignorant person is entitled to both performance of actions and their renunciation, there is mutual contradiction between the two as shown above. And if one of the two has to be undertaken, the more commendable one has to be preferred, not the other. In this way, the question with the intention of knowing the more commendable one is not unjustifiable. From an ascertainment of the meaning of the answer, too, it is understood that the questioner's intention

is just this.

**Objection:** How?

**The answer (of the Lord) is:** Renunciation and Karma-yoga lead to Liberation. But among these, Karma-yoga excels (cf : 5.2). The point to be ascertained is this: Is it that after stating the purpose of renunciation and Karma-yoga-which are resorted to by a knower of the Self-to be Liberation, it is being hereby [In verse (cf: 5.2).-Tr.] said (by the Lord) that between those two themselves, the preeminence of Karma-yoga over renunciation of actions is owing to some speciality, or is it that both those [Both those (idea)-that Karma-yoga, too, leads to Liberation, and also that it is superior to renunciation of actions.-Tr.] (ideas) are asserted (by Him) with respect to renunciation of actions and Karma-yoga practised by one who is ignorant of the Self?

**Objection:** What does it matter if the statement means that Liberation can be attained through renunciation of actions and Karma-yoga practised by one who is ignorant of the Self?

**Objection:** What does it matter if the statement means that Liberation can be attained through renunciation of actions and Karma-yoga undertaken by a knower of the Self, and that, of them Karma-yoga is superior to renunciation of actions; or that both those (ideas) are asserted in respect of renunciation of actions as well as Karma-yoga resorted to by one ignorant of the Self?

**Vedantin:** As to this, the answer is: Since it is impossible that renunciation of actions and Karma-yoga can be undertaken by a knower of the Self, therefore, to say that both of them lead to Liberation, and to call his Karma-yoga as superior to renunciation of action-both these positions are absurd. If it were possible for one ignorant of the Self to undertake renunciation of actions and its opposite, Karma-yoga consisting in the performance of actions, then the two statements that both of them lead to Liberation and that Karma-yoga is superior to renunciation of actions become justifiable. But in the case of the knower of the Self, since it is impossible to pursue both renunciation of actions and Karma-yoga, therefore, to say that they lead to Liberation and that Karma-yoga is superior to renunciation of actions is illogical.

With regard to this the Opponent says: Is it that renunciation of actions and Karma-yoga are both impossible for a knower of the Self, or that one of the two is impossible? If one of the two be impossible, then is it renunciation of actions or Karma-yoga? And the reason for this impossibility should also be stated.

As to this, the answer is: In the case of the knower of the Self, since there has occurred a cessation of false knowledge, Karma-yoga, which is based on erroneous knowledge, will become impossible.

What is being established in various places here in the scripture (Gita), in the various portions dealing with the ascertainment of the real nature of the Self, is this: Having stated that for the knower of the Self, who has realized as his own the Self which is actionless owing to its being free from all such transformations as birth etc. and from whom false ignorance [The compound mithyajnana is to be split as mithya ajnana: that which is false

and is ignorance.] has been eradicated as a result of full enlightenment, there follows renunciation of all actions characterized by abiding in the state of identity with the actionless Self, it is then stated that because of the contradiction between correct knowledge and false ignorance, and their results, Karma-yoga-which is opposed to renunciation of actions, which has false ignorance as its basis, which is preceded by the idea of agentship, and which is preceded by the idea of agentship, and which consists in being established in the active-self-is nonexistent for him. This being so, it will be logical to say that Karma-yoga, which has erroneous knowledge for its source, is impossible for the knower of the Self who has become freed from false knowledge.

**Objection:** In which places, again, dealing with the ascertainment of the true nature of the Self, has been established the absence of actions for the knower of the Self?

**The answer to this is:** Beginning the topic with, 'But know That to be indestructible' (2.17), the absence of actions in the case of the knower of the Self has been stated in various places such as, 'He who thinks of this One as the killer' (2.19), 'he who knows this One as indestructible, eternal' (ibid.21), etc.

**Objection:** Is it not that in the various places dealing with the ascertainment of the real nature of the Self, Karma-yoga, too, has surely been expounded, as for instance in, 'Therefore, O descendant of Bharata, join the battle' (ibid. 18), 'Even considering your own duty' (ibid. 31), 'Your right is for action alone' (ibid. 47), etc.? And consequently, how can Karma-yoga be impossible for the knower of the Self?

**To this the reply is:** Because there is contradiction between right knowledge

and false knowledge, and their effects; because, by the text, 'through the Yoga of Knowledge for the men of realization' (3.3), the steadfastness of the Sankhyas, the men who have known the reality of the Self, in the Yoga of Knowledge characterized as dwelling in the state of identity with the actionless Self, has been distinguished from the steadfastness in Karma-yoga which is resorted to by one ignorant of the Self; because, from the fact of his having attained fulfilment, there is no need of any other means for the knower of the Self; and because absence of any other duty has been pointed out in, 'for him there is no duty to perform' (3.17); also because, in 'A person does not attain freedom from action by abstaining from action' (ibid. 4) and 'But, O mighty-armed one, renunciation (of actions) is hard to attain without (Karma-) yoga' (5.6), Karma-yoga has been prescribed as a means to the knowledge of the Self; and because, with regard to one in whom has arisen full realization, the absence of Karma-yoga has been stated in, '[For the sage who wishes to ascend (to Dhyana-yoga), action is said to be the means.] For that person, when he has ascended to (Dhyana-) yoga, inaction alone is said to be the means' (6.3); and because, actions other than those needed for the sustenance of the body have been ruled out in, 'he incurs no sin by performing actions merely for the (maintenance of the) body' (4.21); also because, in the text, 'the knower of Reality should think, "I certainly do not do anything"' (5.8), it is taught with regard to one who has known the real nature of the Self that, keeping his mind absorbed in the Self, he should never have the idea 'I am doing', even in respect of actions such as seeing, hearing, etc. dictated by the need of merely maintaining the body; and because, in the case of one who has known the reality of the Self, Karma-yoga which is opposed to full enlightenment and is caused by false knowledge cannot be a possibility even in a dream- therefore (for the above reasons), it is only with regard to the renunciation of actions and with regard to Karma-yoga resorted to by one who is ignorant of the self that the statement of their leading to Liberation has been made. And the speciality of (his) Karma-yoga

has been spoken of as being easy of performance in comparison with his renunciation of actions which, as distinguished from the renunciation of all actions by the aforesaid knower of the Self, will be partial owing to the persistence of the idea of agentship and will be difficult to be practised along with yama, niyama, [Yama: non-cruelty, forgiveness, truthfulness, harmlessness, control of the body and organs, straightforwardness, love, serenity, sweetness and absence of anger; Niyama: charity, sacrifice, austerity, meditation, study, celibacy, vows fasting, silence and bathing.] etc.

It stands confirmed that even by interpreting the meaning of the Lord's answer in this way, the above-mentioned intention of the questioner (Arjuna) becomes well established.

In the verse, 'If it be your opinion that Wisdom is superior to action' (3.1), when Arjuna, finding that Knowledge and action cannot coexist, asked, the Lord, 'Tell me that which is superior of the two,' He stated His conclusion that steadfastness in the Yoga of Knowledge was taught for the knowers of the Self, the monks, while steadfastness in Karma-yoga was for the yogis.

From the statement that one does not attain fulfilment from mere renunciation (cf. 3.4), it follows that (renunciation) associated with Knowledge is intended as the means to fulfilment. And since Karma-yoga, too, has been enjoined, therefore, with the intention of knowing the distinction between these two to determine whether renunciation devoid of Knowledge is better or Karma-yoga is better, Arjuna asks:

***Arjuna said:***

1. O Kṛṣṇa, You praise renunciation of actions, and again, (Karma-) yoga. Tell me for certain that one which is better between these two.

(O Kṛṣṇa,) samsāsi, You praise, i.e. speak of; saṁnyasam, renunciation; karmanam, of actions, of performance of various kinds of rites enjoined by the scriptures; punaḥ ca, and again; You praise yogam, yoga, the obligatory performance of those very rites! Therefore I have a doubt as to which is better-Is the performance of actions better, or their rejection? And that which is better should be undertaken. And hence, bruhi, tell; mā, me; suniścitam, for certain, as the one intended by You; tat ekam, that one-one of the two, since performance of the two together by the same person is impossible; yat, which; is śreyah, better, more commendable; etayoh, between these two, between the renunciation of actions and the performance of actions [Ast. reads karma-yoga-anuṣṭhāna (performance of Karma-yoga) in place of karma-anuṣṭhāna (performance of actions).-Tr.], by undertaking which you think I shall acquire what is beneficial.

While stating His own opinion in order to arrive at a conclusion-

***The Blessed Lord said:***

2. Both renunciation of actions and Karma-yoga lead to Liberation. Between the two, Karma-yoga, however, excels over renunciation of actions.



Ubhau, both, to be sure; sannyasah, renunciation of actions; ca, and; karma-yogah, Karma-yoga-their performance-; nihsreyasa-karau, lead to Liberation. Though both lead to Liberation by virtue of being the cause of the rise of Knowledge, even then, tayoh, between the two which are the causes of Liberation; Karma-yoga, tu, however; visisyate, excels; karma-sannyasat, over mere renunciation of actions.

Thus He extols Karma-yoga. [Karma-yoga is better than renunciation of actions that is not based on Knowledge.]

Why? In answer the Lord says:

3. He who does not hate and does not crave should be known as a man of constant renunciation.

For, O mighty-armed one, he who is free from duality becomes easily freed from bondage.

That performer of Karma-yoga, yah, who; na dvesti, does not hate anything; and na kanksati, does not crave; jneyah, should be known; as nitya-sannyasi, a man of constant [A man of constant renunciation: He is a man of renunciation ever before the realization of the actionless Self.] renunciation. The meaning is that he who continues to be like this in the midst of sorrow, happiness and their sources should be known as a man of constant renunciation, even though engaged in actions.

Hi, for; mahabaho, O mighty-armed one; nirdvandvah, one who is free from duality; pramucyate, becomes freed; sukham, easily, without trouble; bandhat, from bondage.

It is reasonable that in the case of renunciation and Karma-yoga, which are opposed to each other and can be undertaken by different persons, there should be opposition even between their results; but it cannot be that both of them surely lead to Liberation. When such a question arises, this is the answer stated:

4. The fools, not the learned ones, speak of Sankhya (the path of Knowledge) and (Karma-) yoga as different. Any one who properly resorts to even one (of them) gets the result of both.

Balah, the fools; na panditah, not the learned ones; pravadanti, speak of; sankhya-yogau, Sankhya [Sankhya, i.e. monasticism, is that which is suited for sankhya, Self-inquiry.] (the Path of Knowledge) and (Karma-)yoga; as prthak, different, having opposite and different results. The learned ones, the wise, however, admit one, unconflicting result. How? Any one who samyak, properly; asthitah, resorts to, i.e. follows; ekam api, even one, between the Path of Knowledge and (Karma-) yoga; vindate, gets; phalam, the result; ubhayoh, of both. For, the result of both is that Liberation itself. Therefore there is no conflict with regard to the result.

**Objection:** After beginning the topic with the words, 'renunciation' and '(Karma-) yoga', how is it that the Lord speaks of the identity of the results of the path of Knowledge and (Karma-) yoga, which is beside the point?

**Reply:** This defect does not arise. Although the question was put by Arjuna merely with regard to renunciation and Karma-yoga, yet the Lord, without actually avoiding them, and by adding something special which was intended by Him, gave the answer by expressing them through other words, 'Sankhya' and '(Karma-) yoga'. Those very 'renunciation and 'Karma-yoga', when they are (respectively) associated with Knowledge and such of Its means as equanimity etc., are meant by the words 'Sankhya' and 'yoga'. This is the Lord's view. Therefore there is no discussion out of the context.

How can the result of both be attained by the proper performance of only one? The answer is:

5. The State [Sthana (State) is used in the derivative sense of 'the place in which one remains established, and from which one does not become relegated'.] that is

reached by the Sankhyas, that is reached by the yogis as well. He sees who sees Sankhya and yoga as one.

Sthanam, the State called Liberation; yat prapyate, that is reached; sankhyaih, by the Sankhyas, by the monks steadfast in Knowledge; tat prapyate, that is reached; yogaih, by the yogis; api, as well. The yogis are those who, as a means to the attainment of Knowledge, undertake actions by dedicating them to God without seeking any result for themselves. The purport is that, by them also that Stated is reached through the process of acquiring monasticism which is a result of the knowledge of the supreme Reality.

Therefore, sah, he; pasyati, sees truly; yah, who; pasyati, sees; Sankhya and yoga as ekam, one, because of the identity of their results. This is the meaning.

**Objection:** If this be so, then monasticism itself excels yoga! Why, then, is it said, 'Among the two, Karma-yoga, however, excels renunciation of actions'?

**Reply:** Hear the reason for this: Having is veiw the mere giving up of actions and Karma-yoga, your question was as to which one was better of the two. My answer was accordingly given that Karma-yoga excels renunciation of actions (resorted to) without Knowledge is Sankhya. This is what was meant by me. And that is indeed yoga in the highest sense. However, that which is the Vedic Karma-yoga is figuratively spoken of as yoga and renunciation since it leads to it (supreme Knowledge).

How does it lead to that? The answer is:

6. But, O mighty-armed one, renunciation is hard to attain without (Karma-) yoga. The meditative man equipped with yoga attains Brahman without delay.

Tu, but, O mighty-armed one; sannyasah, renunciation, in the real sense; duhkham aptum, is hard to attain; ayogatah, without (Karma-) yoga. Muni, the meditative man-the word muni being derived in the sense of one who meditates on the real nature of God; yoga-yuktah, equipped with yoga, with Vedic Karma-yoga in the form of dedication to God without thought of results (for oneself); adhigacchati, attains; brahma, Brahman; na cirena, without delay, very quickly. Therefore it was said by Me, 'Karma-yoga excels'. [Karma-yoga leads to enlightenment through the stages of attenuation of attachment, withdrawal of the internal and external organs from their objects, and their inclination towards the indwelling Self. (Also see Commentary on 5.12).]

The monasticism under discussion is called Brahman because it leads to knowledge of the supreme Self, as stated in the Upanisad, 'Nyasa (monasticism) is Brahman. Brahman is verily the supreme' (Ma. Na. 21.2) Brahman means monasticism in the real sense, consisting in steadfastness to the knowledge of the supreme Self.

7. Endowed with yoga, [i.e. devoted to the performance of the nitya and naimittika duties.] pure in mind, controlled in body, a conqueror of the organs, the Self of the selves of all beings-he does not become tainted even while performing actions. [The construction of the sentence is this: When this person resorts to nitya and naimittika rites and duties as a means to the achievement of fully Illumination, and thus becomes fully enlightened, then, even when he acts through the apparent functions of the mind, organs, etc., he does not become affected.]

When again, as a means to attain full enlightenment, this person becomes yoga-yuktah, endowed with yoga; visuddhatma, pure in mind; vijitatma, controlled in body; jitendriyah, a conqueror of the organs; and sarva-bhutatma-bhutatma, the Self of the selves of all beings-one whose Self (atma), the inmost consciousness, has become the selves (atma) of all beings (sarva-bhuta) beginning from Brahma to a clump of grass-, i.e., fully illumined; (then,) thus continuing in that state, he na lipyate, does not become tainted; kurvan api, even while performing actions for preventing mankind from going astray. That is to say, he does not become bound by actions.

And besides, this person does not act in the real sense. Hence,

8-9. Remaining absorbed in the Self, the knower of Reality should think, 'I certainly do not do anything', even while seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, eating, moving, sleeping, breathing, speaking, releasing, holding, opening and closing the eyes-remembering that the organs function in relation to the objects of the organs.

Yuktah, remaining absorbed in the Self; tattva-vit, the knower of Reality-knower of the real nature of Truth, of the Self, i.e., the seer of the supreme Reality; manyeta, should think; 'na karomi eva, I certainly do not do; kincit, anything.'

Having realized the Truth, when or how should he think? This is being answered; Api, even; pasyan, while seeing; srnvan, hearing; sprsan, touching; jighran, smelling; asnan, eating; gacchan, moving; svapan, sleeping; svasan, breathing; pralapan, speaking; visrjan, releasing; grhnan, holding; unmisan, opening; nimisan, closing the eyes. All these are to be connected with the above manyeta (should think).

For the man who has known the Truth thus, who finds nothing but inaction in action-in all the movements of the body and organs-, and who has full realization, there is competence only for giving up all actions because of his realization of the nonexistence of actions. Indeed, one who proceeds to drink water in a mirage thinking that water is there, surely does not go there itself for drinking water even after knowing that no water exists there!

10. One who acts by dedicating actions to Brahman and by renouncing attachment, he does not become polluted by sin, just as a lotus leaf is not by water.

On the other hand, again, one who is ignorant of the Truth and is engaged in Karma-yoga, yah, who; karoti, acts; adhaya, by dedicating, by surrendering; all karmani, actions; brahmani, to Brahman, to God; with the idea, 'I am working for Him, as a servant does everything for his master', and tyaktva, by renouncing; sangam, attachment, even with regard to the resulting Liberation; sah, he; na lipyate, does not get polluted, is not affected; papena, by sin; iva, just as; padma-patram, a lotus leaf; is not ambhasa, by water.

The only result that will certainly accrue from such action will be the purification of the heart.

11. By giving up attachment, the yogis undertake work merely through the body, mind, intellect and even the organs, for the purification of themselves.

Since tyaktva, by giving up sangam, attachment with regard to results; yoginah, the yogis, men of action; kurvanti, undertake; karma, work; kevalaih, merely- this word is to be construed with each of the words, body etc., so as to deny the idea of ownership with regard to all actions-; kayena, through the body; manasa, through the mind; buddhya, through the intellect; and api, even; indriyaih, through the organs, which are devoid of the idea of ownership, which are unassociated with ownership thus: 'I act only for God, and not for my gain'; atmasudhaye, for the purification of themselves, i.e., for the purification of the heart, therefore you have competence only for that. So you undertake action alone.

And also since,



12. Giving up the result of work by becoming resolute in faith, one attains Peace arising from steadfastness. One who is lacking in resolute faith, being attached to the result under the impulsion of desire, becomes bound.

Tyaktva, giving up; karma-phalam, the result of work; yukta, by becoming resolute in faith, by having this conviction thus-'Actions are for God, not for my gain'; apanoti, attains; santim, Peace, called Liberation; naisthikim arising from steadfastness. It is to be understood that he attains this through the stages of purification of the heart, acquisition of Knowledge, renunciation of all actions, and steadfastness in Knowledge.

On the other hand, however, he who is ayukta, lacking in resolute faith; he, phale saktah, being attached to result; thinking, 'I am doing this work for my gain'; kama-karena, under the impulsion of desire-kara is the same as karana (action); the action of desire (kama-kara; under that impulsion of desire, i.e. being prompted by desire; nibadhyate, gets bound. Therefore you become resolute in faith. This is the idea.

But one who has experienced the supreme Reality-

13. The embodied man of self-control, having given up all actions mentally, continues happily in the town of nine gates, without doing or causing (others) to do anything at all.

Aste, he continues; sukham, happily; sannyasya, having given up; sarva-karmani, all actions-nitya, naimittika, kama and nisiddha (prohibited actions); [See note on p. 128.-Tr.] manasa, mentally, through discriminating wisdom-i.e. having given up (all actions) by seeing inaction in action, etc. Freed from the activities of speech, mind and body, effortless, placid in mind, and devoid of all external wants which are different from the Self, he continues happily. This is what has been said.

Where and how does the vasi, man of self-control, i.e. one who has his organs under control, remain? This is being answered: Nava-dvare pure, in the town with nine gates, of which seven [Two ears, two eyes nostrils, and mouth.] are in the head for one's own experiences, and two are below for urination and defecation. As possessed of those gates, it is called the 'town with nine gates'. Being like a town, the body is called a town with the Self as its only master. And it is inhabited by the organs, mind, intellect and objects, like citizens, as it were, which serve its needs and which are productive of many results and experience. Renouncing all actions, the dehi, embodied one, resides in that town with nine gates.

**Objection:** What is the need of this specification? For all embodied beings, be they monks or not, reside in bodies to be sure! That being so, the specification is needless.

**The answer is:** The embodied one, however, who is unenlightened, who perceives merely the aggregate of the body and organs as the Self, he, in his totality, thinks, 'I am in a house, on the ground, or on the seat.' For one who experiences the body alone as the Self, there can certainly be no such conviction as, 'I am in the body, like one's being in a house.' But, for one who realizes the Self as distinct from the aggregate of body etc. it becomes reasonable to have the conviction, 'I am in the body. It is reasonable that as

a result of knowledge in the form of discriminating wisdom, there can be a mental renunciation of the actions of others, which have been ignorantly superimposed on the supreme Self. Even in the case of one in whom has arisen discriminating wisdom and who has renounced all actions, there can be, like staying in a house, the continuance in the body itself-the town with nine gates-as a consequence of the persistence of the remnants of the results of past actions which have started bearing fruit, because the awareness of being distinct (from the body) arises while one is in the body itself. From the point of view of the difference between the convictions of the enlightened and the unenlightened persons, the qualifying words, 'He continues in the body itself', do have a purpose to serve.

Although it has been stated that one continues (in the body) by relinquishing actions of the body and organs ignorantly superimposed on the Self, still there may be the apprehension that direct or indirect agency inheres in the Self. Anticipating this, the Lord says: *na eva kurvan*, without himself doing anything at all; and *na karayan*, not causing (others) to do, (not) inducing the body and organs to activity.

**Objection:** Is it that the direct or indirect agency of the embodied one inheres in the Self and ceases to be after renunciation, as the movement of a traveller ceases with the stoppage of his movement? Or, is it that they do not exist owing to the very nature of the Self?

As to this, the answer is: The Self by Its nature has neither direct nor indirect agency. For it was stated, 'It is said that...This (Self) is unchangeable' (2.25). 'O son of Kunti, although existing in the body, It does not act, nor is It affected' (13.31). And it is also stated in the Upanisad, 'It seems to meditate, as it were; It seems to move, as it were' (Br. 4.3.7).

14. The Self does not create agentship or any objects (of desire) for anyone; nor association with the results of actions. But it is Nature that acts.

Prabhuh, the Self; na srjati, does not create; lokasya, for anyone; kartṛtvam, agentship, by saying 'Do this'; or even karmani, any objects-such objects as chariot, pot, palace, etc. which are intensely longed for; nor even karma-phala-samyogam, association with the results of actions-association of the creator of a chariot etc. with the result of his work.

**Objection:** If the embodied one does not do anything himself, and does not make others do, then who is it that engages in work by doing and making others do?

**The answer is:** Tu, but; it is svabhavaḥ, Nature- one's own (sva) nature (bhava)-characterized as ignorance, Maya, which will be spoken of in, 'Since this divine Maya' (7.14); pravartate, that acts.

But from the highest standpoint-

15. The Omnipresent neither accepts anybody's sin nor even virtue. Knowledge remains covered by ignorance. Thereby the creatures become deluded.

Vibhuh, the Omnipresent; na adatte, neither accetps; kasyacit, anybody's-even a adevotee's; papam, sin; na ca eva, nor even; does He accept sukrtam, virtue offered by devotees. Why then are such virtuous acts as worship etc. as also sacrifices, charity, oblation, etc. worship etc. as also sacrifices, charity, oblation, etc. offered by devotees? To this the Lord says: Jnanam, knowledge, discriminating wisdom; remains avrtam, covered; ajnanena, by ignorance. Tena, thereby; jantavah, the creatures, the non-discriminating people in the world; muhyanti, become deluded thus-'I do; I make others do; I eat; I make others eat.'

16. But in the case of those of whom that ignorance of theirs becomes destroyed by the knowledge (of the Self), their Knowledge, like the sun, reveals that supreme Reality.

Tu, but; yesam, in the case of those creatures; of whom tat ajnanam, that ignorance; atmanah, of theirs-being covered by which ignorance creatures get deluded-; nasitam, becomes destroyed; jnanena, by knowledge, by discriminating knowledge concerning the Self; tesam, their; jnanam, knowledge; adityavat, like the sun; prakasayati, reveals, in the same way as the sun reveals all forms whatever; tat-param, that supreme Reality, the Reality which is the highest Goal, the totality of whatever is to be known.

17. Those who have their intellect absorbed in That, whose Self is That, who are steadfast in That, who have That as their supreme Goal-they attain the state of non-returning, their dirt having been removed by Knowledge.

Tat-buddhayah, those who have their intellect absorbed in That, [Here Ast. reads 'tasmin brahmani, in that Brahman'.-Tr.] in the supreme Knowledge which has been revealed; tat-atmanah, whose Self is That, who have That (tat) supreme Brahman Itself as their Self (atma); tat-nisthah, who are steadfast in That-nistha is intentness, exclusive devotion; they are called tat-nisthah who become steadfast only in Brahman by renouncing all actions; and tat-parayanah, who have That as their supreme (para) Goal (ayana), who have That alone as their supreme Resort, i.e. who are devoted only to the Self; those who have got their ignorance destroyed by Knowledge-those who are of this kind-, they gacchanti, attain; apunaravrttim, the state of non-returning, non-association again with a body; jnana-nirdhuta-kalmasah, their dirt having been removed, destroyed, by Knowledge. Those whose dirt (kalmasa), the defect in the form of sin etc., which are the cause of transmigration, have been removed, destroyed (nirdhuta), by the aforesaid Knowledge (jnana) are jnana-nirdhuta-kalmasah, i.e. the monks.

How do those learned ones, whose ignorance regarding the Self has been destroyed by Knowledge, look upon Reality? That is being stated:

18. The learned ones look with equanimity on a Brahmana endowed with learning and humility, a cow, an elephant and even a dog as well as an eater of dog's meat.

Panditah, the learned ones; sama-darsinah, look with equanimity; brahmane, on a Brahmana; vidya-vinayasampanne, endowed with learning and humility-vidya means knowledge of the Self, and vinaya means pridelessness-, on a Brahmana who has Self-knowledge and modesty; gavi, on a cow; hastini, on an elephant; ca eva, and even; suni, on a dog; ca, as well as; svapake, on an eater of dog's meat.

Those learned ones who are habituated to see (equally) the unchanging, same and one Brahman, absolutely untouched by the qualities of sattva etc. and the tendencies created by it, as also by the tendencies born of rajas and tamas, in a Brahmana, who is endowed with Knowledge and tranquillity, who is possessed of good tendencies and the quality of sattva; in a cow, which is possessed of the middling quality of rajas and is not spiritually refined; and in an elephant etc., which are wholly and absolutely imbued with the quality of tamas-they are seers of equality.

**Objection:** On the strength of the text, 'A sacrificer incurs sin by not adoring equally one who is an equal, and by adoring equally one who is an equal, to himself' (Gau. Sm. 17.20), are not they sinful, whose food should not be eaten?

**Reply:** They are not open to the charge.

**Objection:** How?

19. Here [i.e. even while living in the body.] itself is rebirth conquered by them whose minds are established on sameness. Since Brahman is the same (in all) and free from defects, therefore they are established in Brahman.

lha eva, here itself, even while they are living; is sargah, rebirth; jitah, conquered, overcome; taih, by them, by the learned ones who see with equanimity; yesam, whose; manah, minds, the internal organs; are sthitam, established, made steadfast; samye, on sameness, in Brahman that exists as the same in all beings. It is nirdosam, free from defects. Because of Its existence in such mean objects as an eater of dog's meat, etc., though It is supposed by fools to be affected by the defects of those (objects), still It remains untouched by those blemishes, hi, because It is free from defects. Nor even is It differentiated by Its qualities, since Consciousness is free from qualifications. And the Lord will speak of desires etc. (cf. 13.6 etc.) as the attributes of the aggregate of body and organs, and will also say, 'Being without beginning and without qualities' (13.31). Nor even are there the ultimate distinctions which can create differentiation in the Self, [According to the Vaisesikas, everything is possessed of not only qualities but also of antya-visesa (ultimate distinction), which is a category like substance, quality, action, etc. This distinction makes every entity different from other entities. Thus, individual souls have their own ultimate distinctions by the very fact that they are individuals.

Vedanta denies such a category. Besides, the Self is one and omnipresent. Therefore there is nothing else from which It can be distinguished.-Tr.] because there is nothing to prove that these ultimate distinctions exist in every body.

Hence, samam brahma, Brahman is the same and one. Tasmāt, therefore; te, they; sthitah, are established; brahmani, in Brahman Itself. As a result, not even a shade of defect touches them. For they have no self-identification in the form of perceiving the aggregate of body etc. as the Self.

On the other hand, that statement (Gau. Sm. 17.20) refers to the man who



has self-identification in the form of perceiving the aggregate of body, (organs) etc. as the Self, for that statement-'A sacrificer incurs sin by not adoring equally one who is an equal, and by adoring equally one who is not equal to himself, pointedly refers to persons who are the objects of adoration. It is indeed seen that in worship, charity, etc. the determining factors are the possession of such special qualities as being 'a knower of Brahman', 'versed in the six auxiliary branches of Vedic learning', and 'versed in the four Vedas'. But Brahman is bereft of association with all qualities and defects. This being so, it is logical that they are established in Brahman. And 'adoring an equal, ....an unequal,' etc. has reference to men of action. [Those engaged in actions with a sense of agentship, etc.-Tr.] But this subject under consideration, beginning from 'The embodied man...having given up all actions mentally' (13) to the end of the chapter, is concerning one who has given up all actions.

Since the Self is Brahman which is without blemish and is the same (in all), therefore-

20. A knower of Brahman, who is established in Brahman, should have his intellect steady and should not be deluded. He should not get delighted by getting what is desirable, nor become dejected by getting what is undesirable.

Brahmavit, a knower of Brahman, as described; sthitah, who is established; brahmani in Brahman- who is not a performer of actions, i.e. one who has renounced all actions; sthira-buddhih, should have his intellect steady-the man of steady intellect is one who has the unwavering, firm conviction of the existence of the one and the same taintless Self in all beings; and further, asammudhah, he should not be deluded, he should be free from delusion. Na prahrsyet, he should not get delighted; prapya, by getting; priyam, what is desirable; na ca udvijet, and surely, neither should he become dejected; prapya, by getting; apriyam, what is undesirable-because the acquisition of the desirable and the undesirable are causes of [Ast.'s reading is 'harsa-visadau kurvate, cause happiness and sorrow' in place of 'harsa-visada-sthane, sources of happiness and sorrow', which (latter) reading occurs in G1. Pr. and A.A.-Tr.] happiness and sorrow for one who considers the body as the Self; not for the one who has realized the absolute Self, since in his case there can be no acquisition of desirable and undesirable objects.

Further, the one who is established in Brahman-

21. With his heart unattached to external objects, he gets the bliss that is in the Self. With his heart absorbed in meditation on Brahman, he acquires undecaying Bliss.

Asakta-atma, with his heart, internal organ, unattached, bahya-sparsesu, to external objects-sparsah means objects that are contacted, viz sound etc.; bahya-sparsah means those things which are external (bahya) and are objects of contact; that person who thus has his heart unattached, who derives no happiness from objects; he vindati, gets that sukham, bliss; yat, which is; atmani, in the Self. Brahma-yoga-yukta-atma, with his heart absorbed in meditation on Brahman-meditation (yoga) on Brahman is brahma-yoga; one whose internal organ (atma) is absorbed in (yukta), engaged in, that meditation on Brahman is brahma-yoga-yukta-atma; he asnute, acquires; aksayam, undecaying; sukham, Bliss.

So, he who cherishes undecaying happiness in the Self should withdraw the organs from the momentary happiness in external objects. This is the meaning.

For this reason also one should withdraw:

22. Since enjoyments that result from contact (with objects) are verily the sources of sorrow and have a beginning and an end, (therefore) O son of Kunti, the wise one does not delight in them.

Hi, since; bhogah, enjoyments; ye samsparsajah, that result from contact with objects, that arise from contact between the objects and the organs; are eva, verily; duhkha-yonayah, sources of sorrow, because they are creations of ignorance. It is certainly a matter of experience that physical and other sorrows are created by that itself. By the use of the word eva (verily), it is understood that, as it happens here in this world, so does it even in the other world. Realizing that there is not the least trace of happiness in the world, one should withdraw the organs from the objects which are comparable to a mirage.

Not only are they sources of sorrow, they also adi-antavantah, have a beginning and an end. Adi (beginning) of enjoyments consists in the contact between objects and senses, and their end (anta), indeed, is the loss of that contact. Hence, they have a beginning and an end, they are impermanent, being present in the intervening moment. This is the meaning. (Therefore) O son of Kunti, budhah, the wise one, the discriminating person who has realized the Reality which is the supreme Goal; na ramate, does not delight; tesu, in them, in enjoyments. For delight in objects is seen only in very foolish beings, as for instance in animals etc.

This extremely painful evil, which is opposed to the path of Bliss and is the source of getting all miseries, is difficult to resist. Therefore one must make the utmost effort to avoid it. Hence the Lord says;

23. One who can withstand here itself-before departing from the body-the impulse arising from desire and anger, that man is a yogi; he is happy.

Yah saknoti, one who can, is able to; sodhum, withstand; iha eva, here itself, while alive; prak, before; sarira-vimoksanat, departing from the body, till death-. Death is put as a limit because the impulse of desire and anger is certainly inevitable for a living person. For this impulse has got infinite sources. One should not relax until his death. That is the idea.

Kama, desire, is the hankering, thirst, with regard to a coveted object-of an earlier experience, and which is a source of pleasure-when it comes within the range of the senses, or is heard of or remembered. And krodha, anger, is that repulsion one has against what are adverse to oneself and are sources of sorrow, when they are seen, heard of or remembered. That impulse (veda) which has those desire and anger as its source (udbhava) is kama-krodha-udbhava-vegah. The impulse arising from desire is a kind of mental agitation, and has the signs of horripilation, joyful eyes, face, etc. The impulse of anger has the signs of trembling of body, perspiration, biting of lips, red eyes, etc. He who is able to withstand that impulse arising from desire and anger, sah narah, that man; is yuktah, a yogi; and sukhi, is happy, in this world.

What kind of a person, being established in Brahman, attains Brahman? The Lord says:

24. One who is happy within, whose pleasure is within, and who has his light only within, that yogi, having become Brahman, attains absorption in Brahman.

Yah antah-sukhah, one who is happy within, in the indwelling Self; and so also antar-aramah, has pleasure within-he disports only in the Self within; similarly, antar-jyotih eva, has his light only within, has the indwelling Self alone as his light; [He has not to depend on the organs like ear etc. for acquiring knowledge.] sah yogi, that yogi; yah, who is of this kind; brahma-bhutah, having become Brahman, even while he is still living; adhigacchati, attains; brahma-nirvanam, absorption in Brahman-gets Liberation.

Besides,

25. The seers whose sins have been attenuated, who are freed from doubt, whose organs are under control, who are engaged in doing good to all beings, attain absorption in Brahman.

Rsayah, the seers, those who have full realization, the monks; ksina-kalmasah, whose sins, defects like sin etc., have been attenuated; chinna-dvaidhah, who are freed from doubt; yata-atmanah, whose organs are under control; ratah, who are engaged; sarvabhutahite, in doing good to all beings-favourably disposed towards all, i.e. harmless; labhante, attain; brahma-nirvanam, absorption in Brahman, Liberation.

Further,

26. To the monks who have control over their internal organ, who are free from desire and anger, who have known the Self, there is absorption in Brahman either way.

Yatinam, to the monks; yata-cetasam, who have control over their internal organ; kama-krodha-viyuktanam, who are free from desire and anger; vidita-atmanam, who have known the Self, i.e. who have full realization; vartate, there is; brahma-nir-vanam, absorption in Brahman, Liberation; abhitah, either way, whether living or dead.

Immediate Liberation of the monks who are steadfast in full realization has been stated. And the Lord has said, and will say, at every stage that Karma-yoga, undertaken as a dedication to Brahman, to God, by surrendering all activities [The activities of body, mind and organs] to God, leads to Liberation through the stages of purification of the heart, attainment of Knowledge, and renunciation of all actions. Thereafter, now, with the idea, 'I shall speak elaborately of the yoga of meditation which is the proximate discipline for full realization,' the Lord gave instruction through some verses in the form of aphorisms:

27-8. Keeping the external objects outside, the eyes at the juncture of the eye-brows, and making equal the outgoing and incoming breaths that move through the nostrils, the contemplative who has control over his organs, mind and intellect should be fully intent on Liberation and free from desire, fear and anger. He who is ever is verily free.

Krtva, keeping; bahyan, the external; sparsan, objects-sound etc.; bahih, outside: To one who does not pay attention to the external objects like sound etc., brought to the intellect through the ear etc., the objects become verily kept outside. Having kept them out in this way, and (keeping) the caksuh, eyes; antare, at the juncture; bhruvoh, of the eye-brows (-the word 'keeping' has to be supplied-); and similarly, samau krtva, making equal; prana-apanau, the outgoing and the incoming breaths; nasa-abhyantara-carinau, that move through the nostrils; munih, the contemplative-derived (from the root man) in the sense of contemplating-, the monk; yata-indriya-mano-buddhih, who has control over his organs, mind and intellect; should be moksa-para-yanah, fully intent on Liberation-keeping his body is such a posture, the contemplative should have Liberation itself as the supreme Goal. He should be vigata-iccha-bhaya-krodhah, free from desire, fear and anger. The monk yah, who; sada, ever remains thus; sah, he; is mukta yah, who;sada, ever remains thus; sah, he; is mukta, ever, verily free. He has no other Liberation to seek after.

What is there to be realized by one who has his mind thus concentrated?

The answer this is being stated:

29. One attains Peace by knowing Me who, as the great Lord of all the worlds, am the enjoyer of sacrifices and austerities, (and) who am the friend of all creatures.



Rcchati, one attains; santim, Peace, complete cessation of transmigration; jnatva, by knowing; mam, Me who am Narayana; who, as the sarva-loka-mahesvaram, great Lord of all the worlds; am the bhoktaram, enjoyer (of the fruits); yajna-tapasam, of sacrifices and austerities, as the performer and the Deity of the sacrifices and austerities (respectively); (and) who am the suhrdam, friend; sarva-bhutanam, of all creatures-who am the Benefactor of all without consideration of return, who exist in the heart of all beings, who am the dispenser of the results of all works, who am the Witness of all perceptions.

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## **Chapter 6 - The Yoga Of Meditation**

**Commentary by Sri Adi Sankaracharya, Translated by Swami Gambhirananda**

The verses, 'Keeping the external objects outside' etc., forming aphorisms on the Yoga of Meditation which is the proximate discipline leading to complete illumination, have been presented at the end of the just preceding chapter. This sixth chapter is begun as an exposition of them. As to that, since rites and duties (i.e. actions) are the preliminary disciplines of the Yoga of Meditation (Dhyana-yoga), therefore actions have to be undertaken by a householder who is qualified for them, so long as he is unable to ascend to the Yoga of Meditation. Hence, the Lord eulogizes it.

**Objection:** Well, since obligatory duties have surely to be performed so long as one lives, why should ascending to Dhyana-yoga be prescribed as a limit?

**Reply:** Not so, because it has been specifically stated, 'For the sage who wishes to ascend to (Dhyana-) yoga, action is said to be the means', and because inaction alone has been prescribed as suitable for that person when he has ascended. If the intention was that inaction and action were both duties for the man desiring to ascend and to the one who has ascended, then the specification and differentiation between one trying to ascend and one who has ascended, from the point of view of the difference between the scopes of inaction and action, becomes meaningless.

**Objection:** In the empirical world, among people belonging to the different stages of life, some one becomes an aspirant for ascending to (Dhyana-) yoga, and some one has ascended to it, whereas others are neither trying to ascend nor have they ascended. May it not be said that with regard to them (the third), it is certainly logical to specify and differentiate by saying 'for one wanting to ascend' and 'for one who has ascended'?

**Reply:** No, because of the statement, 'for that person...alone'; and the use of

the word '(Dhyana-) yoga' over again in, 'when he has ascended to (Dhyana-)yoga', amounts to asserting that, in the case of that very person who was earlier trying to ascend to Yoga, inaction itself becomes a duty as a means to the fruition of Yoga when he has already ascended to it. Hence, no work whatsoever becomes a duty to be followed throughout life.

This follows also from the statement about one who has fallen from Yoga. [The verses 37-9 refer to the fall of a monk who had to renounce all actions (rites and duties) before espousing monasticism. This fact indirectly points out that the injunction about one having to perform actions throughout life does not apply in the case of some people (e.g. monks).] If it be that in the sixth chapter (Dhyana-)yoga has been ordained for a householder who is engaged in rites and duties, then, even though he were to fall from (Dhyana-)yoga, he would still get the goal of actions, i.e. the results of rites and duties. This being so, the apprehension of his ruin (see 37-9) will be illogical. Since Liberation, by virtue of being eternal, is not an effect, therefore, a duty when performed, be it motivated (karma) or obligatory (nitya), will certainly produce its own result [Brahman being self-existent, It cannot be the product of rites and duties; and yet, rites and duties must have some result because they have been enjoined by the Vedas.] (other than Liberation). And we have said that, since the nityakarmas (as also the naimittika-karmas) are known on the authority of the Vedas, therefore they must have some result. For, otherwise, there arises the contingency of the Vedas becoming purposeless. And hence, so long as rites and duties persist, the statement about 'falling from both' does not become meaningful, for, logically there is no cause for the destruction of (the results of) rites and duties.

**Objection:** May it not be said that, since actions are performed by dedicating them to God, therefore the results of actions do not accrue to their agent?

**Reply:** No, because it is reasonable that dedication to God should bring in greater results (to the agent).

**Objection:** May it not be said that they are meant only for Liberation? When dedication of one's own accomplished duties to God is conjoined with (Dhyana-) yoga, it results only in Liberation, not in anything else. And since he has become deflected from (Dhyana-) yoga, therefore in his case it is certainly reasonable to apprehend ruin.

**Reply:** No, because renunciation of actions has been enjoined in, 'alone, with body and mind controlled, free from expectations (and) free from acquisition,' (10) and 'firm in the vow of a celibate' (14). Moreover, in this context it cannot be imagined that during meditation there is need for help from one's wife-to deny which solitude has been enjoined. [Meditation, because of its very nature, is practised in solitude. Therefore, if the word ekaki (alone) were interpreted as prohibiting the participation (in meditation) of the wife of a householder, who otherwise needs her presence during all such Vedic rites as Agnihotra etc., that would amount to a prohibition against a situation that does not arise at all.] And the sentence, 'free from expectations, free from acquisition' (10), etc. is not applicable in the case of a householder; besides, the question of 'falling from both' becomes illogical.

**Objection:** Can it not be held that by the text, 'without depending on the results of action,' etc., renunciation and meditation are enjoined only for the men of action, and renunciation and meditation have been prohibited for one who does not keep a fire and does not perform rites and duties?

**Reply:** No, because that (verse) is meant as a eulogy of renunciation of hankering for the results of actions, which is a remote aid to Dhyana-yoga: The one who simply does not keep a fire and is actionless is not a monk and

a man of meditation. What then? Even a man of action who, for the sake of purification of the mind, performs the yoga of Karma by renouncing attachment to the results of actions may be considered a monk and a man of meditation. The man of action is thus eulogized.

Besides, it is not logical that one and the same sentence should mean an eulogy of renunciation of hankering for the results of actions and also a prohibition of the fourth stage of life (monasticism). Moreover, the Lord is not prohibiting the well-known renunciation and meditation enjoined by the Vedas, Smritis, Puranas, Itihasas and the scriptures on Yoga for a monk who does not keep a fire, who is actionless, and a man of renunciation in the real sense. For that would contradict His own utterances as well. And the Lord has pointed out His own ideas in various places such as, '(The embodied man) having given up all actions mentally, continues (happily)...without doing or causing (others) to do anything at all' (5.13); 'who is silent, content with anything, homeless, steady-minded' (12.19); 'That man...who, after rejecting all desires, moves about' (2.71); 'he who has renounced every undertaking' (12.16). The prohibition of the fourth stage of life will run counter to these (verses).

Therefore, in the case of the sage who wants to attain to Dhyana-yoga but has already entered the householder's life, Agnihotra sacrifices etc., when performed without desire for their results, become a means to ascent to Dhyana-yoga through the purification of the heart. Accordingly, he is praised by saying that 'he is a monk and a man of meditation.'

**The blessed Lord said:**

1. He who performs an action which is his duty, without depending on the result of action, he is a monk and a yogi; (but) not (so in) he who does not keep a fire and is actionless.

Anasritah, without depending on;-on what?-on that which is karma-phalam, the result of action- i.e. without craving for the result of action-. He who craves for the results of actions becomes dependent on the results of actions. But this person is the opposite of such a one. Hence (it is said), 'without depending on the result of action.

Having become so, yah he who; karoti, performs accomplishes; (karma, an action;) which is his karyam, duty, the nityakarmas such as Agnihotra etc. which are opposed to the kamya-karmas-.

Whoever is a man of action of this kind is distinguished from the other men of action. In order to express this idea the Lord says, sah, he ; is a sannyasi, monk, and a yogi. Sannyasa, means renunciation. he who is possessed of this is a sannyasi, a monk. And he is also a yogi. Yoga means concentration of mind. He who has that is a yogi. It is to be understood that this man is possessed of these qualities. It is not to be understood that, only that person who does not keep a fire (niragnih) and who is actionless (akriyah) is a monk and a yogi. Niragnih is one from whom the fires [viz Garhapatya, Ahavaniya, Anvaharya-pacana, etc.], which are the accessories of rites, have become dissociated. By kriya are meant austerity, charity, etc. which are performed without fire.

Akriyah, actionless, is he who does not have even such kriyas.

**Objection:** Is it not only with regard to one who does not keep a fire and is actionless that monasticism and meditateness are well known in the Vedas, Smritis and scriptures dealing with meditation? Why are monasticism and meditateness spoken of here with regard to one who keeps a fire and is a man of action-which is not accepted as a fact?



**Reply:** This defect does not arise, because both are sought to be asserted in some secondary sense.

**Objection:** How is that?

**Reply:** His being monk is by virtue of his having given up hankering for the results of actions; and his being a man of meditation is from the fact of his doing actions as accessories to meditation or from his rejection of thoughts for the results of actions which cause disturbances in the mind. Thus both are used in a figurative sense. On the contrary, it is not that monasticism and meditateness are meant in the primary sense.

With a view to pointing out this idea, the Lord says:

2. That which they call monasticism (sanyasa), know that to be Yoga, O Pandava, For, nobody who has not given up expectations can be a yogi.

Yam, that which is characterized by the giving up of all actions and their results; which prahuh, they, the knowers of the Vedas and the Smrtis, call; sannyasam iti, monasticism, in the real sense; viddhi, known; tam, that monasticism in the real sense; to be yogam, Yoga, consisting in the performance of actions, O Pandava.

Accepting what kind of similarity between Karma-yoga, which is characterized by engagement (in actions), and its opposite, renunciation in the real sense, which is characterized by cessation from work, has their equation been stated?

When such an apprehension arises, the answer is this; From the point of view of the agent, there does exist a simialrity of Karma-yoga with real renunciation. For he who is a monk in the real sense, from the very fact of his having given up all the means needed for accomplishing actions, gives up the thought of all actions and their results-the source of desire that leads to engagement in work. [Thoughts about an object lead to the desire for it, which in turn leads to actions for getting it. (Also see note under 4.19)] also, even while performing actions, gives up the thought for results.

Pointing out this idea, the Lord says: Hi, for; kascit, nobody, no man of action whosoever; asannyasta-sankalpah, who has not given up expactaions-one by whom has not been renounced expectation, anticipation, of results;bhavati, becomes, i.e. can become; yogi, a yogi, a man of concentration, because thought of results is the cause of the disturbance of mind. Therefore, any man of action who gives up the thought of results would become a yogi, a man of concentration with an unperturbed mind, because of his having given up thought of results which is the cause of mental distractions. This is the purport.

Thus, because of the similarity of real monasticism with Karma-yoga from the point of view of giving up by the agent, Karma-yoga is extolled as monasticism in, 'That which they call monasticism, know that to be Yoga, O Pandava.'

Since Karma-yoga, which is independent of results, is the remote help to Dhyana-yoga, therefore it has been praised as monasticism. Thereafter, now the Lord shows how Karma-yoga is helpful to Dhyana-yoga:

3. For the sage who wishes to ascend to (Dhyana-) yoga, action is said to be the means. For that person, when he has ascended to (Dhyana-)yoga, inaction alone is said to be the means.

Aruruksoh, for one who wishes to ascend, who has not ascended, i.e. for that very person who is unable to remain established in Dhyana-yoga; for which person who is desirous to ascend?—munch, for the sage, i.e. for one who has renounced the results of actions;—trying to ascend to what?—yogam, to (Dhyana-) yoga; karma, action; ucyate, is said to be; the karanam, means. Tasya, for that person, again; yoga-arudhasya, when he has ascended to (Dhyana-) yoga; samah, inaction, withdrawal from all actions; eva, alone; ucyate, is said to be; karanam, the means for remaining poised in the state of meditation. This is the meaning.

To the extent that one withdraws from actions, the mind of that man who is at ease and self-controlled becomes concentrated. When this occurs, he at once becomes established in Yoga. And accordingly has it been said by Vyasa: 'For a Brahmana there is no wealth comparable to (the knowledge of) oneness, sameness, truthfulness, character, equipoise, harmlessness, straightforwardness and withdrawal from various actions' (Mbh. Sa. 175.37).

After that, now is being stated when one becomes established in Yoga:

4. Verily, [Verily: This word emphasizes the fact that, since attachment to sense objects like sound etc. and to actions is an obstacle in the path of Yoga, therefore the removal of that obstruction is the means to its attainment.] when a man who has given up thought about everything does not get attached to sense-objects or actions, he is then said to be established in Yoga.

Hi, verily; yada, when; a yogi who is concentrating his mind, sarva-sankalpa-sannyasi, who has given up thought about everything-who is apt to give up (sannyasa) all (sarva) thoughts (sankalpa) which are the causes of desire, for things here and hereafter; na anusajjate, does not become attached, i.e. does not hold the idea that they have to be done by him; indriya-arthesu, with regard to sense-objects like sound etc.; and karmasu, with regard to actions-nitya, naimittika, kamya and nisiddha (prohibited) because of the absence of the idea of their utility; tada, then, at that time; ucyate, he is said to be; yoga-arudhah, established in Yoga, i.e. he is said to have attained to Yoga.

From the expression, 'one who has given up thought about everything', it follows that one has to renounce all desires and all actions, for all desires have thoughts as their source. This accords with such Smṛti texts as:

'Verily, desire has thought as its source. Sacrifices arise from thoughts' (Ma. Sm. 2.3);

'O Desire, I know your source. You surely spring from thought. I shall not think of you. So you will not arise in me' (Mbh. Sa. 177.25).

And when one gives up all desires, renunciation of all actions becomes accomplished. This agrees with such Upanisadic texts as, '(This self is identified with desire alone.) What it desires, it resolves; what it resolves, it works out' (Br. 4.4.5); and also such Smṛti texts as, 'Whatever actions a man does, all that is the effect of desire itself' (Ma. Sm. 2.4). It accords with reason also. For, when all thoughts are renounced, no one can even move a little. So, by the expression, 'one who has given up thought about everything', the Lord makes one renounced all desires and all actions.

When one is thus established in Yoga, then by that very fact one's self becomes uplifted by oneself from the worldly state which is replete with evils.

Hence,

5. One should save oneself by oneself; one should not lower oneself. For oneself is verily one's own friend; oneself is verily one's own enemy.

Uddharet, one should save; atmanam, oneself sunk in the sea of the world; atmana, by oneself; one should save, ut-haret, should uplift (oneself) from that, i.e. make it attain the state of being established in Yoga. Na avasadayet, one should not lower, debase; atmanam, oneself. Hi, for; atma eva, oneself is verily; atmanah one's own; bandhuh, friend. Certainly there is no other friend who can bring about liberation from this world. In fact, even a friend is an obstacle to Liberation, he being the source of such bondages as love etc. Therefore the emphatic statement, 'For one is one's own friend, is justifiable.

Atma eva, oneself verily; is atmanah, one's own: ripuh, enemy. Anyone else who is an external harmful enemy, even he is of one's own making! Therefore the firm conclusion, 'oneself verily is one's own enemy's is reasonable.

It has been said that 'oneself is verily one's own friend, oneself verily is one's own enemy.' As to that, (the self) [Ast. has this additional word, atma, self.-Tr.] of what kind is one's own friend, or (the self) of what kind is one's own enemy? This is being answered:

6. Of him, by whom has been conquered his very self by the self, his self is the friend of his self. But, for one who has not conquered his self, his self itself acts inimically like an enemy.

Tasya, of him; yena, by whom; jitah, has been conquered, subdued; his eva atma, very self, the aggregate of body and organs; that atma, self; is bandhuh, the friend; atmanah, of his self. The idea is that he is a conqueror of his senses. Tu, but; anatmanah, for one who has not conquered his self, who has no self-control; atma eva, his self itself; varteta, acts; satruvat, like an enemy; satrutve, inimically, with the attitude of an enemy. As an enemy, who is different from oneself, does harm to oneself, similarly one's self behaves like an enemy to oneself. This is the meaning. [If the body and organs are under control, they are helpful in concentrating one's mind on the Self; but, if they are not under control, they oppose this concentration.]

7. The supreme Self of one who has control over the aggregate of his body and organs, and who is tranquil, becomes manifest. (He should be equipoised) [These words are supplied to complete the sentence.] in the midst of cold and heat, happiness and sorrow, as also honour and dishonour.

Parama-atma, the supreme Self; jita-atmanah, of one who has control over the aggregate of his body and organs; prasantasya, who is tranquil, who is a monk with his internal organ placid; samahitah, becomes manifest, i.e. becomes directly manifest as his own Self. Moreover, (he should be equipoised) sita-usna-sukha-duhkhesu, in the midst of cold and heat, happiness and sorrow; tatha, as also; mana-apamanayoh in honour and dishonour, adoration and despise.

8. One whose mind is satisfied with knowledge and realization, who is unmoved, who has his organs under control, is sadi to be Self-absorbed. The yogi treats equally a lump of earth, a stone and gold.

A yogi, jnana-vijnana-trpta-atma, whose mind is satisfied with knowledge and realization-jnana is thorough knowledge of things presented by the scriptures, but vijnana is making those things known from the scriptures a subject of one's own realization just as they have been presented; he whose mind (atma) has become contented (trpta) with those jnana and vijnana is jnana-vijnana-trpta-atma-; kutasthah, who is unmoved, i.e. who becomes unshakable; and vijita-indriyah, who has his organs under control;- he who is of this kind, ucyate, is said to be; yuktah, Self-absorbed. That yogi sama-losta-asma-kancanah, treats equally a lump of earth, a stone and gold.

Further,

9. He excels who has sameness of view with regard to a benefactor, a friend, a foe [Ari (foe) is one who does harm behind one's back.], a neutral, an arbiter, the hateful, [Dvesyah is one who openly hateful.] a relative, good people and even sinners.



The first line of the verse beginning with 'benefactor,' etc. is a single compound word.

Visisyate, he excels, i.e. he is the best among all those who are established in Yoga-(a different reading is vimucyate, he becomes free); sama-buddhih, who has sameness of view, i.e. whose mind is not engaged with the question of who one is and what he does; with regard to a suhrd, benefactor-one who does some good without consideration of return; mitram, a friend, one who is affectionate; arih, a foe; udasinah, a neutral, who sides with nobody; madhyasthah, an arbiter, who is a well-wisher of two conflicting parties; dvesyah, the hateful, who is repulsive to oneself; bandhuh, a relative;- to all these as also sadhusu, with regard to good people, who follow the scriptures; api ca, and even; papesu, sinners, who perform prohibited actions-with regard to all of them.

Therefore, to acquire this excellent result-

10. A yogi should constantly concentrate his mind by staying in a solitary place, alone, with mind and body controlled, free from expectations, (and) free from acquisition.

A yogi, a man of meditation; satatam yunjita, should constantly concentrate; atmanam, his mind; sthitah, by staying; rahasi, in a solitary place, in mountain caves etc.; ekaki, alone, without any companion; yata-citta-atma, with mind and body controlled; nirasih, without expectations, free from hankering; and aparigraha, free from acquisition.

From the use of the qualifying words, 'in a solitary place' and 'alone', it follows that (he has to undertake all these) after espousing monasticism. And even after renunciation, he should concentrate his mind by desisting from all acquisition. This is the meaning.

Now then have to be stated the rules regarding seat, food, movements, etc. as disciplines for yoga in the case of one practising concentration; as also the signs of one who has succeeded in Yoga, and the consequent result etc. Hence this is begun. Among these, the seat is being first spoken of:

11. Having firmly established in a clean place his seat, neither too high nor too low, and made of cloth, skin and kusa-grass, placed successively one below the other;

12. (and) sitting on that seat, he should concentrate his mind for the purification of the internal organ, making the mind one-pointed and keeping the actions of the mind and senses under control.

Pratisthapyā, having established; sthīram, firmly; sucau, in a clean; dese, place, which is solitary, either naturally or through improvement; atmanah, his own; asanam, seat; na atī ucchritam, neither too high; na atī nicam, nor even too low; and that made of caila-ajina-kusa-uttram, cloth, skin, and kusa-grass, placed successively one below the other-the successive arrangement of cloth etc. here is in a reverse order to that of the textual reading-.

What follows after thus establishing the seat?

Upavisya, sitting; tatra, on that; asane, seat; yogam yunjyat, he should concentrate his mind. To what purpose should he concentrate his mind? In answer the Lord says: atma-visuddhaye, for the purification of the internal organ. How? Kṛtvā, making; manah, the mind; ekagram, one-pointed, by withdrawing it from all objects; and yata-citta-indriya-kriyā, keeping the actions (kriyā) of the mind (citta) and senses (indriya) under control (yata).

The external seat has been spoken of. Now is being stated how the posture of the body should be:

13. Holding the body, head and neck erect and still, being steady, looking at the tip of his own nose-and not looking around;

14. He should remain seated with a placid mind, free from fear, firm in the vow of a celibate, and with the mind fixed on Me by controlling it through concentration, having Me as the supreme Goal.

Dharayan, holding; kaya-siro-girvam, the body (torso), head and neck; samam, erect; and acalam, still-movement is possible for one (even while) holding these erect; therefore it is specified, 'still'-; sthirah, being steady, i.e. remaining steady; sampreksya, looking svam nasikagram, at tip of his own nose -looking at it intently, as it were; ca, and; anavalokayan, not looking; disah, around, i.e. not glancing now and then in various directions-. The words 'as it were' are to be understood because what is intended here is not an injunction for looking at the tip of one's own nose! What then? It is the fixing the gaze of the eyes by withdrawing it from external objects; and that is enjoined with a veiv to concentrating the mind. [What is sought to be presented here as the primary objective is the concentration of mind. If the gaze be directed outward, then it will result in interrupting that concentration. Therefore the purpose is to first fix the gaze of the eyes within.] If the intention were merely the looking at the tip of the nose, then the mind would remain fixed there itself, not on the Self! In, 'Making the mind fixed in the Self' (25), the Lord will speak of concentrating the mind verily on the Self. Therefore, owing to the missing word iva (as it were), it is merely the withdrawl of the gaze that is implied by sampreksya (looking).

Further, prasantatma, with a placid mind, with a mind completely at peace; vigata-bhiih, free from fear sthitah, firm; brahmacari-vrate, in the vow of a celibate, the vow cosisting in servce of the teacher, eating food got by beggin, etc.-firm in that, i.e. he should follow these; besides, mat-cittah, with the mind fixed on Me who am the supreme God; samyamya, by controlling; manah, the mind, i.e. by stopping the modifications of the mind; yuktah, through concentration, i.e. by becoming concentrated; asita, he should remain seated; matparah, with Me as the supreme Goal. Some passionate person may have his mind on a woman, but he does not accept the woman as his supreme Goal. What then? He accepts the king or Sive as his goal.

But this one (the yogi) not only has his mind on Me but has Me as his Goal.

After that, now is being stated the result of Yoga:

15. Concentrating the mind thus for ever, the yogi of controlled mind achieves the Peace which culminates in Liberation and which abides in Me.

Yunjan, concentrating; atmanam, the mind; evam, thus, according to the methods shown above; sada, for ever; the yogi, niyata-manasah, of controlled mind; adhi-gacchati, achieves; santim, the Peace, the indifference to worldly attachments and possessions; nirvana-paramam, which culminates in Liberation; and mat-samstham, which abides in Me.

Now are being mentioned the rules about the yogi's food etc.:

16. But, O Arjuna, Yoga is not for one who eats too much, nor for one who does not eat at all; neither for one who habitually sleeps too long, nor surely for one who keeps awake.

(Tu, but) O Arjuna, Yoga na asti, is not; atiasnatah, for one who eats too much, for one who eats food more than his capacity; na ca, nor is Yoga; anasnatah, for one who does not eat; ekantam, at all. This accords with the Vedic text, 'As is well known, if one eats that much food which is within one's capacity, then it sustains him, it does not hurt him; that which is more, it harms him; that which is less, it does not sustain him' (Sa. Br.; Bo. Sm. 2.7.22). Therefore, a yogi should not eat food more or less than what is suitable for him. Or the meaning is that Yoga is not for one who eats more food than what is prescribed for a yogi in the scriptures on Yoga. Indeed, the quantity has been mentioned in, 'One half of the stomach is to be filled with food including curries; the third quarter is to be filled with water; but the fourth quarter is to be left for the movement of air,' etc.

Similarly, Yoga is not for ati svapna-silasya, one who habitually sleeps too long; and Yoga is na eva, surely not; jagratah, for one who keeps awake too long.

How, again, does Yoga become possible? This is being stated:

17. Yoga becomes a destroyer of sorrow of one whose eating and movements are regulated, whose effort in works is moderate, and whose sleep and wakefulness are temperate.

Yogah bhavati, Yoga becomes; duhkha-ha, a destroyer of sorrow-that which destroys (hanti) all sorrows (duhkhani)-, i.e., Yoga destroys all worldly sorrows; yukta-ahara-viharasya, of one whose eating and movements are regulated- ahara (lit. food) means all that is gathered in, [According to the Commentator, ahara, which also means food, includes mental 'food as well. See Ch. 7.26.2.-Tr.] and vihara means moving about, walking; one for whom these two are regulated (yukta) is yukta-ahara-vihara-; and also yukta-cestasya, of one whose effort (cesta) is moderate (yukta); karmasu, in works; similarly, yukta-svapna-avabodhasya, of one whose sleep (svapna) and wakefulness (avabodha) are temperate (yukta), have regulated periods. To him whose eating and movements are regulated, whose effort in work is moderate, whose sleep and wakefulness are temperate, Yoga becomes a destroyer of sorrows.

When does a man become concentrated? That is being presently stated:

18. A man who has become free from hankering for all desirable objects is then said to be Self-absorbed when the controlled mind rests in the Self alone.

A yogi, nihsprah, who has become free from hankering, thirst; sarva-kamebhyah, for all desirable objects, seen and unseen; is tada, then; ucyate, said to be; yuktah, Self-absorbed; yada, when; the viniyatam, controlled; cittam, mind, the mind that has been made fully one-pointed by giving up thought of external objects; avatisthate, rests; atmani eva, in the non-dual Self alone, i.e. he gets established in his own Self.

An illustration in being given for the mind of that yogi which has become Self-absorbed:

19. As a lamp kept in a windless place does not flicker, such is the simile thought of for the yogi whose mind is under control, and who is engaged in concentration on the Self.

Yatha, as; a dipah, lamp; nivata-sthah, kept in a windless place; na ingate, does not flicker; sa upama, such is the simile-that with which something is compared is an upama (simile)-; smrta, thought of, by the knowers of Yoga who understand the movements of the mind; yoginah, for the yogi; yata-citasya, whose mind is under control; and yunjatah, who is engaged in; yogam, concentration; atmanah, on the Self, i.e. who is practising Self-absorption.

By dint of practising Yoga thus, when the mind, comparable to a lamp in a windless place, becomes concentrated, then-

20. At the time when the mind restrained through the practice of Yoga gets withdrawn, and just when by seeing the Self by the self one remains contented in the Self alone [A.G. construes the word eva (certainly) with tusyati (remains contented).-Tr.];



Yatra, at the time when; cittam, the mind; niruddham, restrained, entirely prevented from wandering; uparamate, gets withdrawn; yoga-sevaya, through the practice of Yoga; ca, and; yatra eva, just when, at the very moment when; pasyan, by seeing, by experiencing; atmanam, the Self, which by nature is the supreme light of Consciousness; atmana, by the self, by the mind purified by concentration; tusyati, one remains contented, gets delighted; atmani eva, in one's own Self alone-. [Samadhi is of two kinds, Samprajnata and Asamprajnata. The concentration called right knowledge (Samprajnata) is that which is followed by reasoning, discrimination, bliss and unqualified egoism. Asamprajnata is that which is attained by the constant practice of cessation of all mental activity, in which the citta retains only the unmanifested impressions.-Cf. C. W., Vol. I, 1962, pp. 210, 212.

According to A.G. the verses upto 6.20 state in a general way the characteristics of samadhi. From the present verse to the 25th, Asamprajnata-samadhi is introduced and defined.-Tr.]

Besides,

21. When one experiences that absolute Bliss which can be intuited by the intellect and which is beyond the senses, and being established (thus) this person surely does not swerve from Reality;

Yatra, when, at the time when; vetti, one experiences; tat, that; atyantikam, absolute-which is verily limitless, i.e. infinite; sukham, Bliss; yat, which; buddhi-grahyam, can be intuited by the intellect, intuited by the intellect alone, without the help of the senses; and which is atindriyam, beyond the senses, i.e. not objective; (-when one experiences this kind of Bliss) and sthitah, being established in the nature of the Self; ayam, this person, the illumined one; eva, surely; na calati, does not swerve; tattvatah, from that Reality-i.e. does not deviate from the nature of Reality-.

Further,

22. Obtaining which one does not think of any other acquisition to be superior to that, and being established in which one is not perturbed even by great sorrow;

Labdhva, obtaining; yam, which-by acquiring which Self-attainment; na manyate, one does not think; that there is aparam, any other; labham, acquisition; tatah adhikam, superior to that; and also, sthitah, being established; yasmin, in which Reality of the Self; na vicalyate, one is not perturbed; api, even; guruna, by great; duhkkena, sorrow, as may be caused by being struck with weapons, etc.-.

The yoga that has been spoken of as a particular state of the Self, distinguished by its characteristics in the verses beginning with 'At the time when the mind gets withdrawn,' (20) etc.-

23. One should know that severance of contact with sorrow to be what is called Yoga. That Yoga has to be practised with persistence and with an undepressed heart.

Vidyat, one should know; tat, that; duhkha-samyoga-viyogam, severance (viyoga) of contact (samyoga) with sorrow (duhkha); to be verily yoga-sanjnitam, what is called Yoga-i.e. one should know it through a negative definition.

After concluding the topic of the result of Yoga, the need for pursuing Yoga is again being spoken of in another way in order to enjoin 'preservance' and 'freedom from depression' as the disciplines for Yoga: Sah, that; yogah, Yoga, which has

the results as stated above; yuktavyah, has to be practised; niscayena, with perservance; and anirvinnacetasa, with an undepressed heart. That which is not (a) depressed (nirvinnam) is anirvinnam. What is that? The heart. (One has to practise Yoga) with that heart which is free from depression. This is the meaning.

Again,

24. By totally eschewing all desires which arise from thoughts, and restraining with the mind itself all the organs from every side;

25. One should gradually withdraw with the intellect endowed with steadiness. Making the mind fixed in the Self, one should not think of anything whatsoever.

Tyaktva, by eschewing; asesatah, totally, without a trace; sarvan, all; the kamam, desires; sankalpa-prabhavan, which arise from thoughts; and further, viniyamya, restraining; manasa eva, with the mind itself, with the mind endowed with discrimination; indriya-gramam, all the organs; samantatah, from every side; uparamet, one should withdraw, abstain; sanaih sanaih, gradually, not suddenly;-with what?-buddhya, with the intellect;- possessed of what distinction?-dhrti-grhitaya, endowed with steadiness, i.e. with fortitude.

Krtva, making manah, the mind; atma-samstham, fixed in the Self, with the idea, 'The Self alone is all; there is nothing apart from It'-thus fixing the mind on the Self; na cintayet, one should not think of; kincit api, anything whatsoever.

This is the highest instruction about Yoga.

26. (The yogi) should bring (this mind) under the subjugation of the Self Itself, by restraining it from all those causes whatever due to which the restless, unsteady mind wanders away.

In the beginning, the yogi who is thus engaged in making the mind established in the Self, *etat vasam nayet*, should bring this (mind) under the subjugation; *atmani eva*, of the Self Itself; *niyamyā*, by restraining; *etat*. it; *tatah tatah*, from all those causes whatever, viz sound etc.; *yatah yatah*, due to which, due to whatever objects like sound etc.; the *cancalam*, restless, very restless; and therefore *asthiram*, unsteady; *manah*, mind; *niscarati*, wanders away, goes out due to its inherent defects. (It should be restrained) by ascertaining through discrimination those causes to be mere appearances, and with an attitude of detachment. Thus, through the power of practice of Yoga, the mind of the yogi merges in the Self Itself.

27. Supreme Bliss comes to this yogi alone whose mind has become perfectly tranquil, whose (quality of) *rajas* has been eliminated, who has become identified with Brahman, and is taintless.

*Uttamam*, supreme, unsurpassable; *sukham*, Bliss; *upaiti*, comes; *hi enam yoginam*, to this yogi alone; *prasanta-manasam*, whose mind has become perfectly tranquil; *santa-rejasam*, whose (quality of) *rajas* has been eliminated, i.e. whose *rajas*, viz defects such as delusion etc. ['The five *klesas*, pain-bearing obstructions, are: ignorance, egoism, attachment, aversion, and clinging to life' (P.Y.Su.2.3).] have been destroyed; *brahma-bhutam*, who has become identified with Brahman, who is free even while living, who has got the certitude that Brahman is all; and *akalmasam*, who is taintless, free from vice etc.

28. By concentrating his mind constantly thus, the taintless yogi easily attains the absolute Bliss of contact with Brahman.

Sada yunjan, by constantly concentrating; atmanam, his mind; evam, thus, in the process stated; vigata-kalmasah, the taintles, sinless yogi, free from the obstacles to Yoga; sukkena, easily; asnute, attains; atyantam, absolute-that which exists by transcending limits-, supreme, unsurpassable; sukham, Bliss; of brahma-samsparśam, contact with Brahman-the Bliss that is in touch [In touch with, i.e. identified with, homogeneous with, in essential oneness with.] with the supreme Brahman.

Now is being shown that result of Yoga which is the realization of identity with Brahman and which is the cause of the extinction of the whole mundane existence . [Liberation is conceived of in two ways-total cessation of sorrows, and attainment of unsurpassable Bliss.]

29. One who has his mind Self-absorbed through Yoga, and who has the vision of sameness every-where, see this Self existing in everything, and every-thing in his Self.

Yoga-yukta-atma, one who has his mind Self-absorbed through Yoga, whose mind is merged in samadhi; and sarvatra-sama-darsanah, who has the vision of sameness everywhere-who has the vision (darsana) of sameness (sama-tva), the knowledge of identity of the Self and Brahman everywhere (sarvatra) without exception, in all divergent objects beginning from Brahma to immovable things; iksate, sees; atmanam, the Self, his own Self; sarva-bhuta-stham, existing in everything; and sarva-bhutani, everything from Brahma to a clump of grass; unified atmani, in his Self.

The fruit of this realization of the unity of the Self is being stated:

30. One who sees Me in everything, and sees all things in Me-I do not out of his vision, and he also is not lost to My vision.

Yah, one who; pasyati, sees; mam, Me, Vasudeva, who am the Self of all; sarvatra, in all things; ca, and; sees sarvam, all things, all created things, beginning from Brahma; mayi, in Me who am the Self of all; aham, I who am God; na pranasyami, do not go out; tasya, of his vision-of one who has thus realized the unity of the Self; ca sah, and he also; na pranasyati, is not lost; me, to My vision. That man of realization does not get lost to Me, to Vasudeva, because of the identity between him and Me, for that which is called one's own Self is surely dear to one, and since it is I alone who am the seer of the unity of the Self in all.

31. That yogi who, being established in unity, adores Me as existing in all things, he exist in Me-in whatever condition he may be.

This being so, i.e. after reiterating (in the first line of the present verse) the idea of full realization contained in the previous verse, the result of that (realization), viz Liberation, is being spoken of (in the second line): The yogi, the man of full realization; vartate, exists; mayi, in Me, in the supreme state of Visnu; sarvatha api, in whatever condition; vartamanah, he may be. He is verily ever-free. The idea is that he is not obstructed from Liberation by anything.

Furthermore,

32. O Arjuna, that yogi is considered the best who judges what is happiness and sorrow in all beings by the same standard as he would apply to himself.

Atma-aupamyena: Atma means the self, i.e. oneself. That by which a comparison is made is an upama. The abstract form of that is aupamyā. Atma-aupamyā means a standard as would be applicable to oneself.

O Arjuna, yah, he who; pasyati, judges; sarvatra, in all beings; samam, by the same standard, in the same manner; atma-aupamyena, as he would apply to himself-. And what does he view with sameness? That is being stated: As sukham, happiness, is dear to me, so also is happiness agreeable to all creatures.

Va, and-the word va is (used) in the sense of and; just as yadi, whatever; duḥkham, sorrow is unfavourable, unwelcome to me, so also is sorrow unwelcome and unfavourable to all creatures.

In this way, he looks upon happiness and sorrow as pleasant and unpleasant to all beings, by the same standard as he would apply to himself. He does not act against anyone. That is, he is non-injurious. He who is thus non-injurious and steadfast in full Illumination, sah, that yogi; paramah matah, is considered as the best among all the yogis.

Noticing that his Yoga-as spoken of and consisting in full Illumination- is hard to acquire, Arjuna, with a view to hearing the sure means to its attainment, said:

**Arjuna said:**

33. O Madhusudana (Kṛṣṇa), this Yoga that has been spoken of by You as sameness, I do not see its steady continuance, owing to the restlessness (of the mind).



O Madhusudana, ayam, this; yogah, Yoga; yah proktah, that has been spoken of; tvaya, by You; samyena, as sameness; na pasyami, I do not see, I cannot conceive;-what?-etasya, its; sthiram, steady, undisturbed; sthitim, continuance; cancalatvat, owing to the unsteadiness of the mind, which is well known.

34. For, O Krsna, the mind is unsteady, turbulent, strong and obstinate. I consider its control to be as greatly difficult as of the wind.

Hi, for, O Krsna-the word krsna is derived from the root krs [Another derivative meaning may be-'the capacity to draw towards Himself all glorious things of this and the other world'.], in the sense of 'uprooting'; He is Krsna because He uproots the defects such as sin etc. of devotees-; manah, the mind; is cancalam, unsteady. Not only is it very unsteady, it is also pramathi, turbulent. It torments, agitates, the body and the organs. It brings them under extraneous control. Besides, it is balavat, strong, not amenable to anybody's restraint. Again, it is drdham, obstinate, hard as the (large shark called) Tantu-naga (also known as Varjuna-pasa).

Aham, I; manye, consider; tasya, its-of the mind which is of this kind; nigraha, control, restraint; to be (suduskaram, greatly difficult;) vayoh iva, as of the wind. Control of the wind is difficult. I consider the control of the mind to be even more difficult than that. This is the idea.

'This is just as you say.'

### **The Blessed Lord said:**

35. O mighty-armed one, undoubtedly the mind is untractable and restless. But, O son of Kunti, it is brought under control through practice and detachment.

Mahabaho, O mighty-armed one; asamsayam, undoubtedly-there is no doubt with regard to this; that the manah, mind; is durnigraham, untractable; and calm, restless. Tu, but; it-the modifications of the mind in the form of distractions-grhyate, is brought under control; abhyasena, through practice-abhyasa means repetition of some idea or thought of the mind on some mental plane ['Some mental plane' suggests some object of concentration.]; and vairagyena, through detachment-vairagya means absence of hankering for enjoyment of desirable things, seen or unseen, as a result of the practice of discerning their defect.

That mind is thus brought under control, restrained, i.e. completely subdued.

By him, however, who has not controlled his mind-

36. My conviction is that Yoga is difficult to be attained by one of uncontrolled mind. But it is possible to be attained through the (above) means by one who strives and has a controlled mind.

Me, My; matih, conviction; is iti, that; Yoga is dusprapah, difficult to be attained; asamyata-atmana, by one of uncontrolled mind, by one who has not controlled his mind, the internal organ, by practice and detachment. Tu, but, on the other hand; sakyah, Yoga is possible; avaptum, to be attained; yatata, by one who strives, who repeatedly makes effort; upayatah, through the means described above; and vasyatmany, by one of controlled mind, by him whose mind has been brought under control through practice and detachment.

As to that, by accepting the practice of Yoga, actions leading to the attainment of this or the next world may be renounced by a yogi, and yet he may not attain the result of perfection in Yoga, i.e. full Illumination, which is the means to Liberation. Consequently, at the time of death his mind may waver from the path of Yoga. Apprehending that he may be thereby ruined.

**Arjuna said:**

37. O krsna, failing to achieve perfection in Yoga, what goal does one attain who, though possessed of faith, is not diligent and whose mind becomes deflected from Yoga?

O krsna, aprapya, failing to achieve; yoga-sam-siddhim, perfection in Yoga, the result of Yoga, i.e. full Illumination; kam gatim, what goal; gacchati, does one attain; who, though upetah sraddhaya, possessed of faith, belief in God and in the other world; is ayatih, not diligent, devoid of effort on the path of Yoga; and, at the time of death, too, calita-manasah, whose mind becomes deflected; yogat, from Yoga, (i.e.) whose memory has been lost?

38. O Mighty-armed one, fallen from both, without support, deluded on the path to Brahman, does he not get ruined like a scattered cloud?

Mahabaho, O Mighty-armed one; ubhaya-vibhrastah, fallen from both, having fallen from the Path of Action and the Path of Yoga; apratisthah, without support; vimudhah, deluded-having become deluded; brahmanah pathi, on the path of Brahman, on the path leading to Brahman; kaccit na, does he not; nasyati, get ruined; iva, like; a chinna-abhram, scattered cloud? Or is it that he does not?

39. O Krsna, You should totally eradicate this doubt of mine. For, none other than Yourself can be the dispeller of this doubt!

O krsna, arhasi, You should; asesatah, totally; chettum, eradicate, remove; etat, this; samsayam, doubt; me, of mine. Hi, for; na tvad anyah, none other than You, be he a sage or a god; upapadyate, can be; chetta, the despeller, the destroyer; asya, of this; samsayasya, doubt. Therefore you Yourself should dispel (the doubt). This is the meaning.

**The Blessed Lord said:**

40. O Partha, there is certainly no ruin for him here or hereafter. For, no one engaged in good meets with a deplorable end, My son!

O Partha, eva vidyate, there is certainly; na vinasah, no ruin; tasya, for him; iha, here, in this world; or amutra, hereafter, in the other world. Ruin means a birth inferior to the previous one; that is not there for one who has fallen from Yoga. Hi, for; na kascit, no one; kalyana-krt, engaged in good; gacchati, meets with; durgatim, a deplorable end; tata, My son! A father is called tata because he perpetuates himself (tanoti) through the son. Since the father himself becomes the son, therefore the son also is called tata. A disciple is called putra (son). [Sri krsna addressed Arjuna thus because the latter was his disciple.]

But what happens to him?

41. Attaining the worlds of the righteous, and residing there for eternal years, the man fallen from Yoga is born in the house of the pious and the properous.

Prapya, attaining, reaching, lokan, the worlds; punya-krtam, of the righteous, of the performers of the Horse-sacrifice, etc.; and usitva, residing there, enjoying the stay; for sasvatih, eternal; samah, years; (then,) when the period of enjoyment is over, the yoga-bhrastah, man fallen from Yoga, the one who had set out on the path Yoga, i.e. a monk-as understood from the force of the context [From Arjuna's question it might appear that he was asking about the fate of people who fall from both the paths, viz that of Karma and of Meditation. But the possibility of getting ruined by performing actios (rites and duties) according to Vedic instructions does not arise, since their results are inevitable. However, the question of ruin is relevant in the case of a monk, for on the one hand he has renounced actions, and on the other he may fail to attain perfection in Yoga in the present life. Hence, the Lord's answer relates to the fall and ruin of a monk alone.]; abhijayate, is born; gehe, in the house; sucinam, of the pious, who perform actions according to scriptural instructions; and srimatam, who are prosperous.

42. Or he is born in the family of wise yogis [Persons possessing knowledge of Brahman. (S. concedes that some rare householders also can have this knowledge, and he cites the instances of Vasistha, Agastya, Janaka and Asvapati of olden days, and Vacaspati and the author of Khanada of recent times.))] only. Such a birth as is of this kind is surely more difficult to get in the world.

Athava, or; bhavati, he is born; kule, in the family; dhimatam, of wise; yoginam, yogis; eva, only, who are poor-which is different from the family of the prosperous. Etat janma, such a birth; yat idrsam, as is of this kind-a birth that is in the family of poor yogis, in a family as described; is hi, surely; durlabha-taram, more difficult to get, as compared with the earlier one; loke, in the world.

Bequase,

43. There he becomes endowed with that wisdom acquired in the previous body. and he strives more than before for perfection, O scion of the Kuru dynasty.

Tatra, there, in the family of yogis; labhate, tam buddhisamyogam, he becomes endowed with that wisdom; paurva-dehikam, acquired in the previous body. And yatate, he strives; bhuyah, more intensely; tatah, than before, more intensely than that tendency acquired in the previous birth; samsiddau, for, for the sake of, perfection; kuru-nandana, O scion of the Kuru dynasty.

How does he become endowed with the wisdom acquired in the previous body? That is being answered:

44. For, by that very past practice, he is carried forward even in spite of himself! Even a seeker of Yoga transcends the result of the performance of Vedic rituals!

Hi, for; tena eva, by that very; purva-abhyasena, past practice-the powerful habit formed in the past life; hiryate, he, the yogi who had fallen from Yoga, is carried forward; avasah api, even inspite of himself. If he had not committed any act which could be characterized as unrighteous etc. and more powerful than the tendency created by the practice of Yoga, then he is carried forward by the tendency created by the practice of Yoga. If he had committed any unrighteous act which was more powerful, then, even the tendency born of Yoga gets surely overpowered. But when that is exhausted, the tendency born of Yoga begins to take effect by itself. The idea is that it does not get destroyed, even though it may lie in abeyance over a long period.

Jijnasuh api, even a seeker; yogasya, of Yoga from the force of the context, the person implied is a monk who had engaged in the path of Yoga with a desire to know his true nature, but had fallen from Yoga-; even he, ativartate, transcends-will free himself from; sabda-brahma, the result of the performance of Vedic ritual. What to speak of him who after understanding Yoga, may undertake it with steadfastness!

And why is the state of Yoga higher?

45. However, the yogi, applying himself assiduously, becoming purified from sin and attaining perfection through many births, thereby achieves the highest Goal.



The yogi, the man of Knowledge; yatamanah, applying himself; prayatnat, assiduously, i.e. striving more intensely; and as a result, samsuddha-kilbisah, becoming purified from sin; and aneka-janma-samsiddhah, attaining perfection through many births- gathering together tendencies little by little in many births, and attaining perfection through that totality of impressions acquired in many births; tatah, thereby coming to have full Illumination; yati, achieves; the param, highest, most perfect; ;gatim, Goal.

Since this is so, therefore.

46. A yogi is higher than men of austerity; he is considered higher even than men of knowledge. The yogi is also higher than men of action. Therefore, O Arjuna, do you become a yogi.

A yogi is adhikah, higher; tapasvibhyah, than men of austerity; he is matah, considered; adhikah, higher than, superior to; api, even; jnanibhyah, men of knowledge. Jnana here means scriptural learning. (A yogi is superior) to even those who possess that (learning). The yogi is adhikah, higher, greater; karmibhyah, than men of action-karma means Agnihotra etc.; (greater) than those who adhere to them. Since this is so, tasmat, therefore; O Arjuna, bhava, do you become a yogi.

47. Even among all the yogis, he who adores Me with his mind fixed on Me and with faith, he is considered by Me to be the best of the yogis.

Api, even; sarvesam yoginam, among all the yogis, among those who are immersed in meditation on Rudra, Aditya, and others; yah, he who; bhajate, adores; mam, Me; antaratmana, with his mind; madgatena, fixed on Me, concentrated on Me who am Vasudeva; and sraddhavan, with faith, becoming filled with faith; sah, he; is matah, considered; me, by Me; to be yukta-tamah, the best of the yogis, engaged in Yoga most intensely. [It has been shown thus far that Karma-yoga has monasticism as its ultimate culmination. And in the course of expounding Dhyana-yoga together with its auxiliaries, and instructing about the means to control the mind, the Lord rules out the possibility of absolute ruin for a person fallen from Yoga. He has also stated that steadfastness in Knowledge is for a man who knows the meaning of the word tvam (thou) (in 'Thou are That'). All these instructions amount to declaring that Liberation comes from the knowledge of the great Upanisadic saying, 'Thou art That.']

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## Chapter 7 - Jnana and Vijnana Yoga

Commentary by Sri Adi Sankaracharya, Translated by Swami Gambhirananda

After giving rise to an occasion for further enquiry in the verse, 'Even among all the yogis, he who adores Me with his mind fixed on Me and with faith, he is considered by Me to be the best of the yogis', (now) with a view to instructing that 'the reality about Myself is of this kind, and one should have his mind fixed on Me in this way,' [The main themes in the first six chapters are renunciation of actions as the means to attaining Knowledge, and the ascertainment of the word 'Thou' (in 'Thou are That'). The next six chapters are devoted to the adoration of the Lord and the ascertainment of the meaning of the word 'That'.] on His own-

### ***The Blessed Lord said:***

1. O Partha, hear how you, having the mind fixed on Me, practising the Yoga of Meditation and taking refuge in Me, will know Me with certainty and in fulness.

O Partha, mayi asaktamanah, having the mind fixed on Me- one whose mind (manah) is fixed (asakta) on Me (mayi) who am the supreme God possessed on the qualification going to be spoken of-.

Yogam yunjan, practising the Yoga of Meditation, concentrating the mind-.

Madasrayah, taking refuge in Me-one to whom I Myself, the supreme Lord, am the refuge (asraya) is madasrayah-.

Anyone who hankers after some human objective resorts to some rite such as the Agnihotra etc., austerity or charity, which is the means to its attainment. This yogi, however, accepts only Me as his refuge; rejecting any other means, he keeps his mind fixed on Me alone.

Srnu, hear; tat, that, which is being spoken of by Me; as to yatha, how, the process by which; you who, having become thus, jnasyasi, will know; mam, Me; asamsayam, with certainty, without doubt, that the Lord is such indeed; and samagram, in fullness, possessed of such qualities as greatness, strength, power, majesty, etc. [Strength-physical; power-mental; etc. refers to omniscience and will.] in their fullness.

2. I shall tell you in detail of this Knowledge which is combined with realization, [From the statement, 'jnasyasi, you will know', in the earlier verse, one may conclude that the Lord is speaking of indirect or theoretical knowledge. The word 'idam, this' rules out such a conclusion; and it has also been said that this Knowledge is 'savijnanam, combined with direct experience, realization'; it is Consciousness.] after experience which there remains nothing else here to be known again.

Aham, I; vaksyami, shall tell; te, you; asesatah, in detail, fully; of that (Knowledge) about Myself, which is idam, this; jnanam, Knowledge; which is savijnanam, combined with realization, associated with personal enlightenment; yat jnatva, after experiencing which Knowledge; avasisyate, there remains; na anyat, nothing else, anything that can be a means to human ends; jnatavyam, to be known; bhuyah, again; iha, here. (In this way) the Lord praises that Knowledge which is intended to be spoken, in order to draw the attention of the hearer.

Thus, 'he who knows Me in reality becomes omniscient.' This is the idea. Therefore Knowledge is difficult to attain because of its superexcellent result.

How so? This is being answered:

3. Among thousands of men a rare one endeavours for perfection. Even of the perfected ones who are diligent, one perchance knows Me in truth.

Sahasresu manusyanam, among thousands, among a multitude of men; kascit, a rare one; yatati, endeavours; siddhaye, for perfection. [For perfection: for the rise of Knowledge through the purification of the mind.] Siddhanam api, even of the perfected one; yatatam, who are diligent-they (those diligent ones themselves) being (considered to be) verily perfect because they are striving for Liberation; of them-; kascit, one perchance, indeed; vetti, knows; mam, Me; tattvatah, in truth.

Having drawn the attention of the hearer by arousing interest, the Lord says:

4. This Prakrti of Mine is divided eight-fold thus: earth, water, fire, air, space, mind, intellect and also egoism.

lyam, this; prakrtih, Prakrti, [Prakrti here does not mean the Pradhana of the Sankhyas.] the divine power called Maya; me, of Mine, as described; bhinna, is divided; astadha, eight-fold; iti, thus: bhumih, earth-not the gross earth but the subtle element called earth, this being understood from the statement, 'Prakrti (of Mine) is divided eight-fold'. Similarly, the subtle elements alone are referred to even by the words water etc.

Apah, water; analah, fire; vayuh, air; kham, space; manah, mind. By 'mind' is meant its source, egoism. By buddhih, intellect, is meant the principle called mahat [Mahat means Hiranyagarbha, or Cosmic Intelligence.] which is the source of egoism. By ahankarah, egoism, is meant the Unmanifest, associated [Associated, i.e. of the nature of.] with (Cosmic) ignorance. As food mixed with poison is called poison, similarly the Unmanifest, which is the primordial Cause, is called egoism since it is imbued with the impressions resulting from egoism; and egoism is the impelling force (of all). It is indeed seen in the world that egoism is the impelling cause behind all endeavour.

5. O mighty-armed one, this is the inferior (Prakrti). Know the other Prakrti of Mine which, however, is higher than this, which has taken the form of individual souls, and by which this world is upheld.

O mighty-armed one, iyam, this; is apara, the inferior (Prakrti)-not the higher, (but)-the impure, the source of evil and having the nature of worldly bondage. Viddhi, know; anyam, the other, pure; prakrtim, Prakrti; me, of Mine, which is essentially Myself; which, tu, however;is param, higher, more exalted; itah, than this (Prakrti) already spoken of; Jiva-bhutam, which has taken the form of the individual souls, which is characterized as 'the Knower of the body (field)', and which is the cause of sustenance of life; and yaya, by which Prakrti; idam, this; jagat, world; dharyate, is upheld, by permeating it.

6. Understand thus that all things (sentient and insentient) have these as their source. I am the origin as also the end of the whole Universe.

Upadharaya, understand; iti, thus; that sarvani, all; bhutani, things; etat-  
yonini, have these (etat) as their source (yoni)-things that have these lower  
and higher Prakrtis, characterized as the 'field' and the 'Knower of the field  
(body)', as their source are etat-yonini. Since My two Prakrtis are the source,  
the cause of all things, therefore, aham, I; am the prabhavah, origin; tatha, as  
also; the pralayah, end, the termination; krtsnasya, of the whole; jagatah,  
Universe.

The meaning is this: I, who am the omniscient God, am the source of the  
Universe through My two Prakrtis.

Since this is so, therefore-

7. O Dhananjaya, there is nothing else whatsoever higher than Myself. All this is  
strung on Me like pearls on a string.



O Dhananjaya, asti, there is; na anyat kincit, nothing else whatsoever, no other cause; parataram, higher; mattah, than Me, the supreme God; i.e. I Myself am the source of the world. Since this is so, therefore, sarvam, all; idam, this, all things, the Universe; protam, is strung, woven, connected, i.e. transfixed; mayi, on Me, the supreme God; like cloth in the warp, [Like cloth formed by threads constituting its warp and woof.] and iva, like; manigana, peals; suture, on a string.

'What qualities are You endowed with, by virtue of which all this is strung on You? This is being answered:

8. O son of Kunti, I am the taste of water, I am the effulgence of the moon and the sun; (the letter) Om in all the Vedas, the sound in space, and manhood in men.

Kaunteya, O son of Kunti, aham, I; am rasah, the taste, which is the essence of water. The idea is that water is dependent on Me who am its essence. This is how it is to be understood in every case. Just as I am the essence of water, similarly, asmi, I am; the prabha, effulgence; sasi-suryayoh, of the moon and the sun; pranavah, (the letter) Om; sarva-vedesu, in all the Vedas. All the Vedas are established on Me who am that Om. So also (I am) sabdah, the sound; khe, in space, as the essence. Space is established on Me who am that (sound). In the same way, nrsu, in men; (I am) paurusam, manhood- the quality of being man, from which arises the idea of manhood. Men are established on Me who am such.

9. I am also the sweet fragrance in the earth; I am the brilliancy in the fire, and the life in all beings; and I am the austerity of the ascetics.

I am also the punyah, sweet; gandhah, fragrance; prthiviam, in the earth. The earth is dependent on Me who am its fragrance. The natural sweetness of smell in the earth is cited by way of suggesting sweetness of taste of water etc. as well. But foulness of smell etc. is due to contact with particular things, resulting from nescience, unholiness, etc. of worldly people.

Ca, and ; asmi, I am; the tejah, brilliance; vibhavasau, in fire; so also (I am) the jivanam, life-that by which all creatures live; sarva-bhutesu, in all beings. And I am the tapah, austerity; tapasvisu, of ascetics. Ascetics are established in Me who am that austerity.

10. O Partha, know Me to be the eternal Seed of all beings. I am the intellect of the intelligent, I am the courage of the courageous.

O Partha, viddhi, know, mam, Me; to be the sanatanam, eternal; bijam, seed, the source of growth; sarva-bhutanam, of all beings. Besides, I am the buddhih, intellect, the power of discrimination of the mind; buddhimatam, of the intelligent, of people having the power of discrimination. I am the tejah, courage; tejasvinam, of the courageous, of those possessed of that.

11. And of the strong I am the strength which is devoid of passion and attachment. Among creatures I am desire which is not contrary to righteousness, O scion of the Bharata dyansty.

I am the balam, strength, ability, virility; balavatam, of the strong. That strength, again, is kama-raga-vivarjitam, devoid of passion and attachment. Kamah is passion, hankering for things not at hand. Ragah is attachment, fondness for things acquired. I am the strength that is devoid of them and is necessary merely for the maintenance of the body etc., but not that strength of the worldly which causes hankering and attachment.

Further, bhutesu, among creatures; I am that kamah, desire-such desires as for eating, drinking, etc. which are for the mere maintenance of the body and so on; which is dharma-aviruddhah, not contrary to righteousness, not opposed to scriptural injunctions; bharatarsabha, O scion of the Bharata dynasty.

Moreover,

12. Those things that indeed are made of (the quality of ) sattva, and those things that are made of (the quality of) rajas and tamas, know them to have sprung from Me alone. However, I am not in them; they are in Me!

Ye bhavah, those things; sattvikah eva, that indeed are made of (the quality of) sattva; and ye rajasah, those that are made (of the quality) of rajas; and tamasah, those that are made of (the quality of) tamas-whatever things are made (of sattva, rajas and tamas) according to the creatures's own actions: viddhi, know; tan, them, all without exception; mattah eva iti, to have sprung from Me alone when they come into being. Although they originate from Me, still, tu, however; aham, I; am na tesu, not in them-I am not subject to them, not under their control, as are the transmigrating beings. Te, they, again; mayi, are in Me, subject to Me, under My control. [For sattva, rajas, and tamas see note under 2.45 as also Chapters 14, 17 and 18.-Tr.]

'The world does not know Me, the supreme Lord, even though I am of this kind, and am eternal, pure, intelligent and free by nature, [See note on p.4.-Tr.] the Self of all beings, free from all qualities, the cause of burning away the seed of the evil of transmigration!'-in this way the Lord expresses regret. And what is the source of that ignorance in the world? That is being stated:

13. All this world, deluded as it is by these three things made of the gunas (qualities), does not know Me who am transcendental to these and undecaying.

Sarvam, all; idam, this; jagat, world, the aggregate of creatures; mohitam, deluded as it is-made to have indiscrimination; ebhih, by these; aforesaid tribhiih, three; bhavaiih, things, in the forms of attachment, repulsion, delusion, etc; and gunamayaiih, made of the gunas, of the transformations of the gunas; na abhijanati, does not know; mam, Me; who am param, transcendental to, distinct, different; ebhyah, from these gunas as referred to above; and am avyayam, undecaying, i.e. free from all (the six kinds of) changes in things, viz birth etc. [See note on p.38.-Tr.]

How, again, do they cross over this divine Maya of Visnu, constituted by the three gunas? That is being stated:

14. Since this divine Maya of Mine which is constituted by the gunas is difficult to cross over, (therefore) those who take refuge in Me alone cross over this Maya.

Hi, since; esa, this, aforesaid; daivi, divine; Maya mama, of Mine, of God, of Visnu, which (Maya) is My own; and which is guna-mayi, constituted by the gunas; is duratyaya, difficult to cross over; therefore, this being so, ye, those who; wholeheartedly prapadyante, take refuge; mam eva, in Me alone, in Me who am the Master of Maya and who am their own Self, by giving up all forms of rites and duties; te, they; taranti, cross over; etam, this; mayam, Maya, which deludes all beings. That is to say, they become freed from the bondage of the world.

'If it is that those who resort to You cross over this Maya, why then do not all take refuge in You alone?' This is being answered:

15. The foolish evildoers, who are the most depraved among men, who are deprived of (their) wisdom by Maya, and who resort to demoniacal ways, do not take refuge in Me.

Mudhah, the foolish; duskrtinah, evildoers, sinners; who are nara-adhamah, the most depraved among men; who are also apa-hrta-jnanah, deprived of, despoiled of (their) wisdom; mayaya, by Maya; and asritah, who resort to; asuram bhavam, demoniacal, ways, such as cruelty, untruthfulness, etc.; na, do not; prapadyante, take refuge; man, in Me, the supreme God.

16. O Arjuna, foremost of the Bharata dynasty, four classes of people of virtuous deeds adore Me: the afflicted, the seeker of Knowledge, the seeker of wealth and the man of Knowledge.

Again, O Arjuna, foremost of the Bharata dynasty, caturvidhah, four classes; of janah, people; who are eminent among human beings and are pious in actions, and are sukrtinah, of virtuous deeds; bhajante, adore; mam, Me; artah, the afflicted-one who is overcome by sorrow, who is in distress, [One who, being in distress and seeking to be saved from it, takes refuge (in Me).] being over-whelmed by thieves, tigers, disease, etc.; jijnasuh, the seeker of Knowledge, who wants to know the reality of the Lord; artharthi, the seeker of wealth; and jnani, the man of Knowledge, [i.e. one who, already having intellectual knowledge, aspires for Liberation.] who knows the reality of Visnu.

17. Of them, the man of Knowledge, endowed with constant steadfastness and one-pointed devotion, excels. For I am very much dear to the man of Knowledge, and he too is dear to Me.

Tesam, of them, among the four; jnani, the man of Knowledge, the knower of Reality, is nitya-yuktah, endowed with constant steadfastness as a result of being a knower of Reality; and he also becomes eka-bhaktih, endowed with one-pointed devotion, because he finds no one else whom he can adore. Consequently, that person of one-pointed devotion visisyate, excels, becomes superior, i.e. he surpasses (the others).

Hi, since; I, the Self, am priyah, dear; jnaninah, to the man of Knowledge; therefore aham, I; am atyartham, very much; priyah, dear to him. It is indeed a well known fact in the world that the Self is dear. The meaning, therefore, is that Vasudeva, being the Self of the man of Knowledge, is dear to him. And sah, he, the man of Knowledge, being the very Self of Me who am Vasudeva; is very much priyah, dear; mama, to Me.

'If that be so, then the other three-the afflicted and the others-are not dear to Vasudeva?' 'This is not so!' 'What then?'

18. All of these, indeed, are noble, but the man of Knowledge is the very Self. (This is) My opinion. For, with a steadfast mind, he is set on the path leading to Me alone who am the super-excellent Goal.

Sarve, etc, all of these three, without exception; are eva, indeed, udarah, noble, i.e.; they are verily dear to Me. For, no devotee of Mine can become disagreeable to Me who am Vasudeva. But the man of Knowledge becomes very much dear. This is the difference.

Why is this so? In answer the Lord says: Tu but; jnani, the man of Knowledge; is atma eva, the very Self, not different from Me. This is me, My; matam, opinion, conviction. Hi, for; yuktatma, with a steadfast mind-having his mind absorbed in the idea, 'I am verily Vasudeva, the Lord, and none else', that man of Knowledge asthitah, is set on the path leading to, he is engaged in ascending to, going to; mam eva, Me alone, to the supreme Brahman; who am the anuttamam gatim, super-excellent Goal to be reached.

The man of Knowledge is being eulogized again:

19. At the end of many births the man of Knowledge attains Me, (realizing) that Vasudeva is all. Such a high-souled one is very rare.



Ante, at the end, after the completion; bahunam, of many; janmanam, births, which became the repository for accumulating [Ast. omits this word.-Tr.] the tendencies leading to Knowledge; jnanavan, the man of Knowledge, who has got his Knowledge matured; directly prapadyate, attains; mam, Me, Vasudeva, who am the inmost Self; (realizing)-in what way?-iti, that; Vasudeva is sarvam, all. Sah, such a one, who realizes Me [Here Ast. adds the word Narayana.-Tr.] thus as the Self of all; is mahatma, a high-souled one. There is none else who can equal or excel him.

Therefore he is su-durlabhah, very rare among thousands of men, as it has been said (in verse 3).

The reason why one does not realize that all this is verily Vasudeva, the Self, is being stated:

20. People, deprived of their wisdom by desires for various objects and guided by their own nature, resort to other deities following the relevant methods.

People, hrta-jnanah, deprived of their wisdom, deprived of their discriminating knowledge; taih taih kamaih, by desires for various objects, such as progeny, cattle, heaven, etc.; and niyatah, guided, compelled; svaya prakrtya, by their own nature, by particular tendencies gathered in the past lives; prapadyante, resort; anya-devatah, to other deities, who are different from Vasudeva, the Self; asthaya, following taking the help of; tam tam niyamam, the relevant methods-those processes that are well known for the adoration of the concerned deities.

21. Whichever form (of a deity) any devotee wants to worship with faith, that very firm faith of his I strengthen.

Yam yam, whichever; tanum, form of a deity; yah, any covetous person- among these people with desires; who, being endowed sraddhaya, with faith; and being a bhaktah, devotee; icchati, wants; arcitum, to worship; tam eva, that very; acalam, firm, steady; sraddham, faith; tasya, of his, of that particular covetous person-that very faith with which he desires to worship whatever form of a deity, in which (worship) he was earlier engaged under the impulsion of his own nature-; [Ast. takes the portion 'svabhavatah yo yam devata-tanum sraddhaya arcitum icchati' with the next verse.-Tr.] vidadhami, I strengthen.

22. Being imbued with that faith, that person engages in worshipping that form, and he gets those very desired results therefrom as they are dispensed by Me alone.

Yuktah, being endued; taya, with that; sraddhaya, faith, as granted by Me; sah, that person; ihate, engages in; radhanam, i.e. aradhanam, worshipping; tasyah, that form of the deity. And labhate, he gets; tan hi, those very; kaman, desired results; tatah, there-from, from that form of the deity which was worshipped; as vihitan, they are dispensed, meted out; maya eva, by Me alone, who am the omniscient, supreme God, because I am possessed of the knowledge of the apportionment of the results of actions.

The meaning is that he surely gets those desired results since they are ordained by God.

If the reading be hitan (instead of hi tan), then the beneficence (-hita means beneficent-) of the desired result should be interpreted in a figurative sense, for desires cannot be beneficial to anyone!

23. That result of theirs who are of poor intellect is indeed limited. The worshippers of gods go to the gods. My devotees go to Me alone.

Since those non-discriminating men with desires are engaged in disciplines for limited results, therefore, tat phalam, that result; tesam, of theirs; alpamedhasam, who are of poor intellect, of poor wisdom; antavat tu bhavati, is limited, ephemeral, indeed. Deva-yajah, the worshippers of gods; yanti, go; devan, to the gods. Madbhaktah, My devotees; yanti, to; mam api, to Me alone.

'Thus, though the effort needed is the same, they do not resort to me alone for the unlimited result. Alas! they are surely in a pitiable condition.' In this manner the Lord expresses his compassion.

'Why do they not take refuge in Me alone?'

The answer is:

24. The unintelligent, unaware of My supreme state which is immutable and unsurpassable, think of Me as the unmanifest that has become manifest.

Abuddhayah, the unintelligent, the non-discriminating ones; ajanantah, unaware; mama, of My; param, supreme; bhavam, state, My reality as the supreme Self; which is avyayam, immutable, undecaying; and anuttanam, unsurpassable; manyante, think; mam, of Me; as avyaktam, the unmanifest, the invisible; apannam, that has become; vyaktim, manifest, visible, at present [At present, after being embodied as an Incarnation.]-though I am the ever well-known God. They think so because they are unaware of My reality. This is the idea.

What is the reason for their ignorance? This is being stated:

25. Being enveloped by yoga-maya, I do not become manifest to all. This deluded world does not know Me who am birthless and undecaying.

Yoga-maya-samavrtah, being enveloped by yoga-maya-Yoga means the combination, the coming together, of the (three) gunas; that (combination) is itself maya, yoga-maya; being enveloped, i.e. veiled, by that yoga-maya; aham, I; na prakasah, do not become manifest; sarvasya, to all, to the world. The idea is that I become manifest only to some devotees of Mine. For this very reason, ayam, this; mudhah, deluded; lokah, world; na abhijanati, does not know; mam, Me; who am ajam, birthless; and avyayam, undecaying. [In verse 13 the reason for the non-realization of the supreme, unqualified Brahman was stated. The present verse states the reason for the non-realization of the qualified Brahman.]

'That yoga-maya, because of My being covered by which the world does not know Me- that yoga-maya, since it belongs to Me, does not obstruct the knowledge of Me who am God, the possessor of maya, just as the magic of any other magician does not cover his knowledge.' Since this is so, therefore-

26. O Arjuna, I know the past and the present as also the future beings; but no one knows Me!

O Arjuna, aham, I, however; veda, know; samatitani, the past beings; and vartamanani, the present. I know ca, also; bhavisyani, the future; bhutani, beings. Tu, but; na kascana, no one; veda, knows; mam, Me. Except the one person who is My devotee and has taken refuge in Me, no one adores Me, jus because he does not know My reality.

'What, again, is the obstruction to knowing Your reality, being prevented by which the creatures that are born do not know You?' In anticipation of such a question, the Lord says this:

27. O scion of the Bharata dynasty, O destroyer of foes, due to the delusion of duality arising from likes and dislikes, all creatures become bewildered at the time of their birth.

iccha-dvesa-samutthana, by what arises from likes and dislikes: iccha, likes, and dvesa, dislikes, are iccha-dvesau; anything arising from them is icchadvesa-samutthah. (Creatures are deluded) by that. By what? When that is thus sought to be known in particular, the Lord answers: dvandva-mohana, by the delusion of duality. Delusion (moha) that originates from duality (advandva) is dvandva-moha. Those very likes and dislikes, which are mutually opposed like heat and cold, which relate to happiness and sorrow and their causes, and which come into association with all beings in due course, are termed as duality (and this deludes all creatures).

As regards them, when likes and dislikes arise from the experience of happiness, sorrow and their causes, then, by bringing the wisdom of all beings under their control, they create bewilderment which is the cause of the impediment to the rise of knowledge about the reality of Self, the supreme Truth. Indeed, exact knowledge about objects even in the external world does not arise in one whose mind is overpowered by the defects, viz likes and dislikes. It goes without saying that knowledge of the indwelling Self, beset with many obstacles as it is, does not arise in a completely bewildered person whose intelligence has been overcome by them.

Therefore, bharata, O scion of the Bharata dynasty; owing to that delusion of duality arising from likes and dislikes, sarvabhutani, all creatures become deluded. Parantapa, O destroyer of foes; they yanti sammoham, become bewildered, come under delusion; sarge, at the time of their birth, i.e. at the time of their origination. The idea is that all creatures that come into being do so prepossessed by delusion. 'Since this is so, therefore all creatures, being deluded and having their wisdom obstructed by that delusion of duality, do not know Me who am their Self. Hence, they do not adore Me as their Self.'

'Who, again, are those that, becoming free from the delusion of duality, come to know You, and adore You as the Self in accordance with the scriptures?'

In order to elaborate the subject enquired about, it is being said:

28. On the other hand, those persons who are of virtuous deeds, whose sin has come to an end, they, being free from the delusion of duality and firm in their convictions, adore Me.

Yesam jananam, those persons; tu, on the other hand; punya-karmanam, who are of virtuous deeds, in whom exist virtuous deeds that are the cause of purification of the mind; whose papam, sin; antagatam, has come to an end, is almost eradicated, attenuated; te, they; dvandva-moha-nirmuktah, being free from the delusion of duality as described; and drdhavratah, firm in their convictions-those who [Here Ast. adds, 'sarva-parityaga-vratena, through the vow of relinquishing everything'.-Tr.] have the firm knowledge that the supreme Reality is such alone and not otherwise are called drdhavratah-; bhajante, adore; mam, Me, the supreme Self.

Why do they worship? This is being answered:

29. Those who strive by resorting to Me for becoming free from old age and death, they know that Brahman, everything about the individual Self, and all about actions. [They know Brahman as being all the individual entities and all actions. This verse prescribes meditation on the qualified Brahman for aspirants of the middle class. Verses beginning with the 14th speak about the realization of the unqualified Brahman by aspirants of the highest class.]



Ye, those who; yatanti, strive; asritya, by resorting; mam, to Me, the supreme God, by having their minds absorbed in Me; jara-marana-moksaya, for becoming free from old age and death; te, they; viduh, know; tat, that; brahma, Brahman, which is the Supreme; they know krtsnam, everything; about adhyatmam, the individual Self, that indwelling intity; ca, and; they know akhiliam, all; about karma, actions.

30. Those who know me as existing in the physical and the divine planes, and also in the context of the sacrifice, they of concentrated minds know Me even at the time of death.

Ye, those who; viduh, know; mam, Me; sa-adhi-bhuta-adhidaivam, as existing in the physical and the divine planes; ca, and also; sa-adhiyajnam, as existing in the context of the sacrifice; te, they; yukta-cetasah, of concentrated minds-those who have their minds absorbed in God; viduh, know; mam, Me; api ca, even; prayanakale, at the time of death. [For those who are devoted to God, there is not only the knowledge of Brahman as identified with all individuals and all actions (see previous verse), but also the knowledge of It as existing in all things on the physical, the divine and the sacrificial planes. Those who realize Brhaman as existing in the context of all the five, viz of the individual, of actions, of the physical, of the divine, and of the sacrifices-for them with such a realization there is no forgetting, loss of awareness, of Brahman even at the critical moment of death.]

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## Chapter 8 - Akshara Parabrahma Yoga

Commentary by Sri Adi Sankaracharya, Translated by Swami Gambhirananda

In the text, '...they know that Brahman, everything (about the individual Self)' (7.29) etc., the Lord has created scope for Arjuna's questions. Consequently, by way of raising those questions-

### ***Arjuna said:***

1. O supreme person, what is that Brahman? What is that which exists in the individual plane? What is action? And what is that which is said to exist in the physical plane? What is that which is said to be existing in the divine plane?
2. O Madhusudana, how, and who, is the entity existing in the sacrifice here in this body? And at the time of death, how are You to be known by people of concentrated minds?

In order to settle these questions seriatim-

### ***The Blessed Lord said:***

3. The Immutable is the supreme Brahman; self-hood is said to the entity present in the individual plane. By action is meant the offerings which bring about the origin of the existence of things.

Aksaram means that which does not perish (na ksarati), the supreme Self. This agrees with the Upanisadic text, 'Under the mighty rule of this Immutable, O Gargi...' (Br. 3.8.9). And (the letter) Om is not accept here [as the meaning of aksara (lit. letter)], because of its being mentioned (as a letter) later on in, 'The single letter Om, which is Brahman' (13). Besides, the adjective 'supreme' is more appropriate with regard to the absolute, immutable Brahman.

By svabhava, self-hood, is meant the existence of that very supreme Brahman in every body as the indwelling Self. Svabhava ucyate, self-hood is said to be, is referred to by the word; adhyatmam, the entity which, as the indwelling Self, exists in the body (atma) by making it its habitat (adhikrtya), and which in the ultimate analysis is the supreme Brahman.

Visargah, the offerings, the giving away to gods of things like porridge [Caru: An oblations of rice, barley and pulse boiled-together to be offered to gods.], cake, etc.; bhuta-bhava-udbhava-karah, which bring about the origin of the existence of things; is karma-sanjnitah, meant by action. This sacrifice consisting in pouring of oblations is called action. The existence (bhava) of (moving and nonmoving) things (bhuta) is bhuta-bhava. The coming into being (udbhava) of that (existence) is bhuta-bhava-udbhavah. That which causes (karoti) this is bhuta-bhava-udbhava-karah, i.e. the originator of existing things. It is needed from this source that all beings, moving and non-moving, originate through the successive processes of rainfall etc. (see 3.14-15).

4. The which exists in the physical plane is the mutable entity, and what exists in the divine plane is the Person. O best among the embodied beings, I Myself am the entity that exists in the sacrifice in this body.

Adhibhutam, that which exists in the physical plane, i.e. that which exists by comprising all creatures;-what is it?-it consists of the ksarah bhavah, mutable entity. Ksarah is that which is mutable, which is destructible; bhavah means anything whatsoever that has origination. This is meaning.

Purusah means the Person, derived in the sense of he by whom all things are pervaded; or, he who lies in every heart. He is Hiranyagarbha, who resides in the Sun and sustains the organs of all creatures. He is adhi-daivatam, the entity existing in the divine plane.

Deha-bhrtam-vara, O best among the embodied beings; adhiyajnah, the entity existing in sacrifices, is the Deity, called Visnu, presiding over all sacrifices-which agrees with the Vedic text, 'Sacrifice is indeed Vishu' (Tai, Sam. 1.7.4). Aham eva, I Myself, who am that very Visnu; am adhiyajnah, the entity existing in the sacrifice; which is going on atra dehe, in this body. Since a sacrifice is performed with body, therefore it is closely associated with the body. In this sense it is said to be going on in the body.

5. And at the time of death, anyone who departs by giving up the body while thinking of Me alone, he attains My state. There is no doubt about this.

Ca, and ; anta-kale, at the time of death; yah, anyone who; prayati, departs; muktva, by giving up; the kalevaram, body; smaran, while thinking; mam eva, of Me alone, who am the supreme Lord Visnu; sah, he; yati, attains; madhavam, My state, the Reality that is Vishu, Asti, there is; na, no; samsayah, doubt; atra, about this, in this regard, as to whether he attains (Me) or not.

'This rule does not apply in relation to me alone.' 'What then?'

6. O son of Kunti, thinking of any entity whichever it may be one gives up the body at the end, he attains that very one, having been always engrossed in its thought.

O Son of Kunti, smaran, thinking of; bhavam, any entity, any particular deity; yam yam va api, which ever it may be; tyajati, one gives up; the kalevaram, body; ante, at the end, at the time of the departure of life; eti, he attains; tam tam eva, that very one, that very entity which is remembered-none else; having been sada, always; tadbhava-bhavitah, engrossed in its thought. Engrossment in it is tad-bhavah; one by whom that is remembered as a matter of habitual recollection is tadbhava-bhavitah.

Since the last thought is thus the cause of acquiring the next body-

7. Therefore, think of Me at all times and fight. There is no doubt that by dedicating your mind and intellect to Me, you will attain Me alone.

Tasmat, therefore; anusmara, think of; mam, Me, in the way prescribed by the scriptures; sarvesu kalesu, at all times; and yudhya, fight, engage yourself in war, which is your own (caste) duty. Asamsayah, there is no doubt in this matter; that arpita-mano-buddhih, by dedicating your mind and intellect; mayi; to Me; esyasi, you-you who have thus dedicated our mind and intellect to Me, Vasudeva-will attain; mam eva, Me alone, as I shall be remembered. [When the Lord instructs Arjuna to think of Him, and at the same time engage in war, it may seem that He envisages a combination of Knowledge and action. But this is not so, because when one thinks of all actions, accessories and results that come within the purview of the mind and the intellect as Brahman, it is denied that actions etc. have any separate reality apart from Brahman. Therefore no combination is involved here.]

Besides,

8. O son of Prtha, by meditating with a mind which is engaged in the yoga of practice and which does not stray away to anything else, one reaches the supreme Person existing in the effulgent region.

Partha, O son of Prtha; anu-cintayan, by meditating, i.e. contemplating in accordance with (anu) the instruction of teachers and scriptures; cestasa, with a mind; abhyasa-yogayuktena, engaged in the yoga of practice-  
abhyasa, practice, consists in the repetition of the same kind of thought, uninterrupted by any contrary idea, with regard to Me who am the object of concentration of the mind; that practice itself is yoga; the mind of a yogi is engrossed (yuktam) in that itself; with a mind that is such, and na anyagamina, which does not stray away to anything else which is not inclined to go away to any other object; yati, one reaches; the paramam, supreme, unsurpassed; purusam, Person; divyam, existing in the effulgent region (divi), in the Solar Orb.

And, to what kind of a Person does he go? This is being stated:

9. He who meditates on the Omniscient, the Anceint, the Ruler, subtler than the subtle, the Ordainer of everything, of inconceivable form, effulgent like the sun, and beyond darkness-(he attains the supreme Person).

Yah, he who, anyone who; anusmaret, meditates on; kavim, the Omniscient, the Knower of things past, present and future; puranam, the Ancient, the Eternal; anusasitaram, the Ruler, the Lord of the whole Universe; aniyamsam, subtler; anoh, than the subtle; dhataram, the Ordainer; sarvasya, of everything-one who grants the fruits of actions, in all their varieties, individually to all creatures; acintya-rupam, who is of inconceivable form-His form, though always existing, defies being conceived of by anybody; aditya-varnam, who is effulgent like the sun, who is manifest as eternal Consciousness like the effulgence of the sun; and parastat, beyond; tamasah, darkness-beyond the darkness of delusion in the form of ignorance-(he attains the supreme Person). This verse is to be connected with the earlier itself thus: 'by meditating (on Him)....he attains Him.'

Further,

10. At the time of death, having fully fixed the Prana (vita force) between the eyebrows with an unswerving mind, and being imbued with devotion as also the strength of concentration, he reaches that resplendent supreme person.



Prayana-kale, at the time of death; after first brining the mind under control in the lotus of the heart, and then lifting up the vital force-through the nerve going upward-by gradually gaining control over (the rudiments of nature such as) earth etc. [Space, air, fire, water and earth.] and after that, samyak, avesya, having fully fixed; pranam, the Prana (vital force); madhye, between; the bhruvoh, eye-brows, without losing attention; acalena manasa, with an unwavering mind; he, the yogi possessed of such wisdom, yuktah, imbued; bhaktya, with devotion, deep love; ca eva, as also; yoga-balena, [Yoga means spiritual absorption, the fixing of the mind on Reality alone, to the exclusion of any other object.] with the strength of concentration-i.e; imbued with that (strength) also, consisting in steadfastness of the mind arising from accumulation of impressions resulting from spiritual absorption; upaiti, reaches; tam, that; div yam, resplendent; param, supreme; purusam, Person, described as 'the Omniscient, the Ancient,' etc.

The Lord again speaks of Brahman which is sought to be attained by the process going to be stated, and which is described through such characteristics as, 'What is declared by the knowers of the Vedas,'etc.:

11. I shall speak to you briefly of that immutable Goal which the knowers of the Vedas declare, into which enter the deligent ones free from attachment, and aspiring for which people practise celibacy.

Pravaksye, I shall speak; te, to you; samgrahena, briefly; tat, of that; which is called the aksaram, immutable-that which does not get exhausted, which is indestructible; padam, Goal to be reached; yat, which; veda-vidah, the knowers of the Vedas, the knowers of the purport of the Vedas; vedanti, declare, speak of It as opposed to all qualifications-'It is neither gross nor minute' (Br. 3.8.8) etc.-, in accordance with the Upanisadic text, 'O Gargi, the knowers of Brahman say this Immutable (Brahman) is that' (ibid); and further, yat, into which, after the attainment of complete realization; visanti, enter; yatayah, the diligent ones, the monks; who have become vita-ragah, free from attachment; and icchantah, aspiring to know (-to know being supplied to complete the sense-); yat, which Immutable; people caranti, practise; brahmacaryam, celibacy-at the teacher's house.

Commencing with, "O venerable sir, which world does he really win thereby who, among men, intently meditates on Om in that wonderful way till death?" To him he said, "O Satyakama, this very Brahman that is (known as) the inferior and superior is but this Om" (pr.5.1-2), it has been stated, 'Again, anyone who meditates on the supreme Purusa with the help of this very syllable Om, as possessed of three letters,...he is lifted up to the world of Brahma (Hiranyagarbha) by the Sama-mantras,' (op.cit.5) etc. Again, beginning with '(Tell me of that thing which you see as) different from virtue, different from vice,' it has been stated, 'I tell you briefly of that goal which all the Vedas with one voice propound, which all the austerities speak of, and wishing for which people practise Brahmacarya: it is this, viz Om' (Ka.1.2.14-15), etc.

In the above quotations, Om which is going to be spoken of is presented as a name of this supreme Brahman, and also as Its symbol like an image. This has been done as a means to meditation on it (Om) for the attainment of the supreme Brahman by people of low and mediocre intellect, in as much

as this leads to Liberation in course of time. Here also that very meditation on Om in the manner stated above-which is the means of attaining the supreme Brahman introduced in, '(He who meditates on) the Omniscient, the Ancient,' and in, '(I shall speak to you briefly of that immutable Goal) which the knowers of the Vedas declare,' and which (meditation) leads to Liberation in due course [Realization of Brahman leads to immediate Liberation (sadyomukti, whereas meditation (contemplation, upasana) leads to gradual Liberation (krama-mukti).-Tr.]-has to be spoken of along with 'adherence to yoga' as also whatever is connected directly or indirectly with it. For this purpose the following text is begun:

12. Having controlled all the passages, having confined the mind in the heart, and having fixed his own vital force in the head, (and then) continuing in the firmness in yoga;

Samyamyā, having controlled; sarva-dvarāni, all the passages, the doors of perception; niruddhya, having confined; the manah, mind; hr̥dī, in the heart- not allowing it to spread out; and after that, with the help of the mind controlled therein, rising up through the nerve running upward from the heart, ādhaya, having fixed; atmanah, his own; prāṇam, vital force; mūrdhni, in the head; (and then) asthitaḥ, continuing in; yogadharanam, the firmness in yoga-in order to make it steady-.

And while fixing it there itself,

13. He who departs by leaving the body while uttering the single syllable, viz Om, which is Brahman, and thinking of Me, he attains the supreme Goal.

Yah, he who; prayati, departs, dies; tyajan, by leaving; deham, the body-the phrase 'leaving the body' is meant for qualifying departure; thereby it is implied that the soul's departure occurs by abandoning the body, and not through the destruction of its own reality, having abandoned thus-; vyaharan, while uttering; the eka-adsaram, single syllable; om iti brahma, viz Om, which is Brahman, Om which is the name of Brahman; and anusmaran, thinking; mam, of Me, of God who is implied by that (syllable); sah, he; yati, attains; the paramam, supreme, best; gatim, Goal.

Further,

14. O son of Prtha, to that yogi of constant concentration and single-minded attention, who remembers Me uninterruptedly and for long, I am easy of attainment.

Partha, O son of Prtha, tasya yoginah, to that yogi; nitya-yuktasya, of constant concentration, who is ever absorbed (in God); and ananya-cetah, of single-minded attention, a yogi whose mind is not drawn to any other object; yah, who; smarati, remembers; mam, Me, the supreme God; satatam, uninterruptedly; and nityasah, for long-.

By satatam, uninterruptedly, is meant 'without any break'. By nityasah, is meant along duration. Not six months, nor even a year! What then? The meaning is: He who remembers Me for his whole life, continuously.

To that yogi aham, I; am sulabhah, easy of attainment. Since this is so, therefore one should remain ever absorbed in Me, with mind given to nothing else.

'What follows from Your being easy of attainment?' This is being answered: 'Hear what follows from My being easy of attainment.'

15. As a result of reaching Me, the exalted ones who have attained the highest perfection do not get rebirth which is an abode of sorrows and which is impermanent.

Upetya mam, as a result of reaching Me who am God-as a result of realizing My nature; mahatmanah, the exalted ones, the monks; gatah, who have attained; the paramam, highest; samsiddhim, perfection, called Liberation; na, do not; apnuvanti, get; this kind of punarjanama, rebirth. As to what kind of rebirth they do not get, the Lord states its characteristics-duhkhalayam, which is an abode of sorrows, a resort of physical and other sorrows, i.e. a birth to which sorrows adhere. It is not merely an abode of sorrows, but also asavatam, impermanent, having no fixity of nature.

On the other hand, those who do not reach Me, they come again.

Again, 'Is it that those who attain someone other than You return?' This is being answered:

16. O Arjuna, all the worlds together with the world of Brahma are subject to return. But, O son of Kunti, there is no rebirth after reaching Me.

O Arjuna, all the lokah, worlds; abrahma-bhuvanah, together with the world of Brahma-bhuvana is that (place) in which creatures are born, and brahma-bhuvana means the world of Brahma; punah avartinah, are subject to return, are by nature liable to come again; Tu, but; kaunteya, O son of Kunti, na vidyate, there is no; punarjanma, rebirth; upetya, after reaching; mam, Me alone.

Why are all the worlds together with the realm of Brahma subject to return? Because they are limited by time. How?

17. Those people who are knowers of what day and night are, know the day of Brahma which ends in a thousand yugas [The four yugas (in the human worlds), viz Satya, Treta, Dwapara, and Kali are made up of 4,320,000 years. This period

multiplied by a thousand constitutes one day of Brahma. His night also extends over an equal period. See M.S. and V.S.A.], and His night which ends in a thousand yugas.

Viduh, they know; that ahah, day; brahmanah, of Brahma, of Prajapati, of Virat; yat, which; sahasra-yuga-paryantam, ends in a thousand yugas; and also the ratir, night; yuga-sahasra-antam, which ends in a thousand yugas, having the same duration as the day. Who knows (these)? In reply the Lord says: Te, they; janah, people; ahoratra-vidah, who are the knowers of what day and night are, i.e. the people who know the measurement of time. Since the worlds are thus delimited by time, therefore they are subject to return.

What happens during the day and the night of Prajapati is being stated:

18. With the coming of day all manifested things emerge from the Unmanifest and when night comes they merge in that itself which is called the Unmanifested.

Ahar-ahame, with the coming of day, at the time when Brahma wakes; sarvah vyaktayah, all manifested things, all things that get manifested, all creatures characterized as moving and non-moving; prabhavanti, emerge, become manifested; avyaktat, from the Unmanifested-avyakta (Unmanifested) is the state of sleep of Prajapati; from that avyakta. Similarly, ratri-ahame, when night comes, at the time when Brahma sleeps; praliyante, they, all the manifested things, merge; tatra eva, in that itself; avyakta-sanjñake, which is called the Unmanifested referred to above.

In order to obviate the defect of the emergence of some unmerited result and the destruction of merited results; [The following verse says that the very same multitude of beings continues in the different cycles of creation, and therefore these two defects do not arise.] for pointing out the meaningfulness of the scriptures [For the earlier reason the scriptures do not lose their validity.] dealing with bondage and Liberation; and with a view to propounding detachment from the world on the ground that the helpless multitude of beings perishes after being born again and again under the influence of accumulated results of actions that have for their origin such evils as ignorance etc. [The five evils are: ignorance, egoism, attachment, aversion and clinging to life. (See P. Y. Su. 2.3)], the Lord says this:

19. O son of Prtha, after being born again and again, that very multitude of beings disappears in spite of itself at the approach of night. It comes to life at the approach of day.



O son of Prtha, bhutva, after being born again and again at the approach of day; sah eva, that very-not any other; bhutagramah, multitude of beings, consisting of the moving and the non-moving objects that existed in the earlier cycle of creation; praliyate, disappears repeatedly; avasah, in spite of itself, [For they are impelled by their own defects] without any independence whatever; ratri-agame, at the approach of night, at the close of the day. Prabhavati, it comes to life, verily in spite of itself; ahar-agame, at the approach of day.

The means for the attainment of that Immutable which was introduced has been pointed out in, 'He who departs by leaving the body while uttering the single syllable, viz Om, which is Brahman, ' etc. (13). Now, with a view to indicating the real nature of that very Immutable, this is being said-that It is to be reached through this path of yoga:

20. But distinct from that Unmanifested is the other eternal unmanifest Reality, who does not get destroyed when all beings get destroyed.

He is parah, distinct, different;-From what?-tasmāt, from that aforesaid (Unmanifested).

The word tu, but, is meant for showing the distinction of the Immutable that is going to be spoken of from the Unmanifested.

He is bhavah, the Reality, the supreme Brahman called the Immutable.

Even though different, there is the possibility of similarity of characteristics. Hence, for obviating this the Lord says: anyah, the other, of a different characteristic, and He is the Immutable which is beyond the range of the organs. It has been said that He is distinct from that. From what, again is He distinct? Avyaktat, from the Unmanifested spoken of earlier, which is the seed of the multitude of beings, and which is characterized as ignorance (avidya) [Ast. adds, 'anyah vilaksanah, bhavah ityabhiprayah: The meaning is that the Reality is different and distinct (from that Unmanifested).-Tr.] He is sanatnah, eternal.

Bhavah, the Reality; yah sah, who is such; na, does not; vinasyati, get destroyed; when sarvesu bhutesu, all beings, beginning from Brahma; nasyatsu, get destroyed.

21. He who has been mentioned as the Unmanifested, the Immutable, they call Him the supreme Goal. That is the supreme abode of Mine, reaching which they do not return.

He Himself who has been uktah, mentioned; as avyaktah, Unmanifest; the aksarah, Immutable; ahuh, they call; tam, Him-that very unmanifest Reality which is termed as the Immutable; the paramam, supreme; gatim, Goal. Tat, That; is the paramam, supreme; dhama, abode, i.e. the supreme State; mama, of Mine, of Visnu; yam prapya, reaching which Reality; na nivartante, they do not return to the worldly state.

The means for gaining That is being stated:

22. O son of Prtha, that supreme Person-in whom are included (all) the beings and by whom all this is pervaded-is, indeed, reached through one-pointed devotion.

O son of Prtha, sah, that; parah purusah, supreme, unsurpassable Person- (the word purusa) derived in the sense of 'residing in the heart' or 'all-pervasiveness'; that Person, compared to whom there is nothing superior-; yasya, in whom, in which Person; antahsthani, are included; bhutani, (all) the beings which are Its products-for a product remains inherent in its cause; and yena, by whom, by which Person; tatam, is pervaded; sarvam, all; idam, this, the Universe, as pot etc. are by space; is tu, indeed; labhyah, reached; through anyanya, one-pointed; bhaktya, through devotion, characterized as Knowledge; anyanya, which is one pointed, which relates to the Self.

The Northern Path meant for the attainment of Braman by the yogis under discussion, who have superimposed the idea of Brahman on the syllable Om and who are destined to get Liberation in due course, has to be stated.

Hence, in order to present the intended idea the verse, '(O best of the Bharata dynasty) of that time...at which,' etc. is being recited. The description of the Path of Return (in verse 25) is by way of praising the other Path (of Departure, in verse 24):

23. O best of the Bharata dynasty, I shall now speak of that time by departing at which the yogis attain the State of Non-return, and also (of the time by departing at which they attain) the State of Return.

Bharatarsabha, O best of the Bharata dynasty; vaksyami, I shall speak; tu, now; tam, of that; kalam, time; prayatah, by departing, by dying; (-these words are to be which time; yoginah, the yogis; yanti, attain; anavrttim, the State of Non-return, of nonrebirth; ca eva, and also; of the time by departing at which they attain its opposite, avrttim, the State of Return.

By 'Yogis' are implied both the yogis (men of meditation) and the men of acitons (rites and duties).

But the men of action are yogis by courtesy, in accordance with the description, 'through the Yoga of Action for the yogis' (3.3).

The Lord speaks of that time: [This is Ast.'s reading.-Tr.]

24. Fire, light, daytime, the birght fornnight, the six months of the Northern solstice- by following this Path, persons who are knowers of Brahman attain Brahman when they die.

Agnih, fire-is a deity presiding over a period of time; similarly, jyotih, light-also is a deity presiding over a period of time. Or fire and light are the well-known Vedic deities.

As the expression 'mango grove' is used with regard to a place where mango trees are more numerous, similarly, the expressions 'at which time' and 'that time' (in the earlier verse) are used in view of the predominance (of the deities presiding over time). [If the first two (fire and light) are taken as Vedic deities, then the remaining three are the only deities of time. Still, the latter being numerically greater, all the five deities are referred to as deities of time. The deities of both the Paths-of gods and manes, or of the Northern and the Southern Paths as they are called-who are gods of time, are referred to here as 'time' by such words as day, fortnight, six months, etc.]

So also, ahah, daytime, means the deity of daytime. Suklah, the bright fortnight, implies the deity presiding over the bright fortnight. Sanmasah uttarayanam, the six months of the Northern solstice-here, too, is understood the deity presiding over the Path. This is the principle (of interpretation followed elsewhere (in the Upanisads also).

Tatra, following this Path; janah, persons; who are brahma-vidah, knowers of Brahman, those engaged in meditation on (the qualified) Brahman; gacchanti, attain; brahma, Brahman; prayatah, when they die. It is understood that they attain Brahman through stages. Indeed, according to the Upanisadic text, 'His vital forces do not depart' (Br. 4.4.46), there is neither going nor coming back for those established in full realization, who are fit for immediate Liberation. Having their organs merged in Brahman, they are suffused with Brahman, they are verily identified with Brahman.

25. Smoke, night, as also the dark fortnight and the six months of the Southern solstice-following this Path the yogi having reached the lunar light, returns.

Dhuman, smoke; and ratrih night, are the deities presiding over smoke and night. Similarly, krsnah, the dark fortnight, means the deity of the dark fortnight. Just as before, by sanmasah daksinayanam the six months of the Southern solstice, also is verily meant a deity. Tatra, following this Path; yogi, the yogi who performs sacrifices etc., the man of actions; prapya, having reached; candramasam jyotih, the lunar light-having enjoyed the results (of his actions); nivartate, returns, on their exhaustion.

26. These two courses of the world, which are white and black, are verily considered eternal. By the one a man goes to the State of Non-return; by the other he returns again.

Ete, these two; gati, courses; jagatah, of the world; which are sukla-krsne, white and black [The Northern Path (the path of the Gods), and the Southern Path (the Path of the Manes) respectively.]-white because it is a revealer of Knowledge, and black because there is absence of that (revelation); are hi, verily; mate, considered; sasvate, eternal, because the world is eternal. These two courses are possible for those who are qualified for Knowledge and for rites and duties; not for everybody. This being so, ekaya, by the one, by the white one; yati, a man goes; anavrttim, to the State of Non-return; anyaya, by the other; avartate, he returns; punah, again.

27. O son of Prtha, no yogi [One steadfast in meditation.] whosoever has known these two courses becomes deluded. Therefore, O Arjuna, be you steadfast in yoga at all times.

O son of Prtha, na kascana yogi, no yogi whosoever; janan, has known; ete srti, these two courses as described-that one leads to worldly life, and the other to Liberation; muhyati, becomes deluded. Tasmāt, therefore; O Arjuna, bhava, be you; yoga-yuktah, steadfast in Yoga; sarvesu kalesu, at all times.

Here about the greatness of that yoga:

28. Having known this, the yogi transcends all those results of righteous deeds that are declared with regard to the Vedas, sacrifices, austerities and also charities, and he reaches the primordial supreme State.

Viditva, having known; idam, this-having fully ascertained and practised what was spoken in the course of determining the answers to the seven questions (put by Arjuna in verse 1 and 2); the yogi atyeti, transcends, goes beyond; tat sarvam, all those; punya-phalam, results of righteous deeds, aggregate of rewards; yat, that are; pradistam, declared by the scriptures; with regard to these, viz vedesu, with regard to the Vedas which have been properly [Sitting facing eastward after having washed one's hands, face, etc.] studied; yajnesu, with regard to sacrifices performed together with their accessories; tapahsu, with regard to austerities practised correctly [With concentrated mind, intellect, etc.]; ca eva, and also; danesu, with regard to charities rightly [Taking into consideration place, time and fitness of the recipient.] given; and upaiti, he reaches; the param, supreme; sthanam, State of God; adyam, which is primordial, the Cause that existed in the beginning, i.e. Brahman.

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## Chapter 9 - Raja Vidya, Raja Guhya Yoga

Commentary by Sri Adi Sankaracharya, Translated by Swami Gambhirananda

The yoga associated with (its part) dharana (concentration) (practised) while proceeding through the (susumna) nerve has been dealt with in the eighth chapter, together with its subsidiary disciplines (see (8.12). And its result has been indicated as the Stated of Non-return, which in fact is the realization of Brahman Itself, in due course of time by successively reaching fire, light, etc. In that connection, a doubt may arise that the result in the form of attainment of Liberation is achieved only through this process, and not through any other. For dispelling this-

### ***The Blessed Lord said:***

1. However, to you who are not given to cavilling I shall speak of this highest secret itself, which is Knowledge [Jnana may mean Brahman that is Consciousness, or Its knowledge gathered from the Vedas (paroksa-jnana). Vijnana is direct experience (aparoksa-jnana).] combined with experience, by realizing which you shall be free from evil.

Te, to you; anasuyave, who are not given to caviling, who are free from carping; pravaksyami, I shall speak of; idam, this.

The Lord uttered the word 'this' by bearing in mind as an immediately present fact the knowledge of Brahman that will be and was spoken of in the earlier chapters. The word tu (however) is used for pointing out a distinction [The distinction of Knowledge from meditation that was being discussed.].

(I shall speak) of this itself-what is that?-(it is) guhyatamam, the highest secret; and is jnanam, Knowledge, complete Knowledge-nothing else-, the direct means to Liberation, as stated in the Upanisads and the Smrtis, 'Vasudeva is all' (7.19), 'the Self verily is all this' (Ch. 7.25.2), 'One only, without a second' (op. cit. 6.2.1), etc., and also as stated in such Upanisadic texts as, 'On the other hand, those who understand otherwise than this come under a different ruler, and belong to the worlds that are subject to decay' (op. cit. 7.25.2). (Knowledge) of what kind? It is vijñāna-sahitam, combined with experience; jñatva, by realizing, by attaining; yat, which Knowledge; mokṣyase, you shall be free; aśubhat, from evil, from worldly bondage.

2. This is the Sovereign Knowledge, the Sovereign Profundity, the best sanctifire; directly realizable, righteous, very easy to practise and imperishable.

And that is raja-vidya, the Sovereign Knowledge, the kind among sciences because of the abundance of its radiance. Indeed, this knowledge of Brahman shines most brilliantly among all kinds of learning [The word raja means a king, or figuratively, the greatest; or, derived from the root raj, to shine, it may mean shining.-Tr.] So also, idam, this; is raja-guhyam, the Sovereign Profundity, the kind among profundities; uttamam, the best; pavitram, sanctifier. This knowledge of Brahman, which sanctifies all things that purify, is the greatest. Shine it reduces to ashes in a moment (the results of) all actions-righteous, unrighteous and others-together with their roots, accumulated over many thousands of births, therefore, what to speak of its sanctifying power! Besides, it is pratyaksavagamam, directly realizable, directly perceivable like happiness etc.

Even though possessed of many qualities, a thing may be noticed to be contrary to righteousness. The knowledge of the Self is not opposed to righteousness, in that way, but it is dharmyam, righteous, not divorced from righteousness. Even so, it may be difficult to practice. Hence the Lord says it is susukham, very easy; kartum to practise, like the knowledge of the distinction among jewels. It is seen (in the world) that, actions which require little effort and are accomplished easily yield meagre results, whereas those that are difficult to accomplish yield great results. Thus the contingency arises that this (knowledge of Brahman), however, which is easily attained, perishes when its result gets exhausted. Therefore the Lord says it is avyayam, imperishable. From the point of view of its result, it is not perishable like (the results of) actions. Hence the knowledge of the Self should be highly regarded.

3. O destroyer of foes, persons who are regardless of this Dharma (knowledge of the Self) certainly go round and round, without reaching Me, along the path of transmigration which is fraught with death.

Parantapa, O destroyer of foes; those purusah, persons, again; who are asraddadhanah, regardless of, devoid of faith in; asya dharmasya, this Dharma, this knowledge of the Self-those who are faithless as regards its true nature as well as its result, who are sinful, who have taken recourse to the 'upanisad' (mystical teaching) of demoniacal people, consisting in consideration the body alone as the Self, and who delight in life (sense enjoyments); nivartante, certainly go round and round;-where?-mrtyu-samsara-vartmani, along the path (vartma) of transmigration (samsara) fraught with death (mrtyu), the path leading to hell, birth as low creatures, etc., i.e., they go round and round along that very path; aprapya, without reaching; mam, Me, the supreme God. Certainly there is no question of their attaining Me. Hence, the implication is that (they go round and round) without even acquiring a little devotion, which is one of the disciplines [Ast. omits the word sadhana, disciplines.-Tr.] constituting the path for reaching Me.

Having drawn Arjuna's attention through the (above) eulogy, the Lord says:

4. This whole world is predated by Me in My unmanifest form. All beings exist in Me, but I am not contained in them!

Idam, this; sarvam, whole; jagat, world; is tatam, pervaded; maya, by Me; through the supreme nature, that I have, avyakta-murtina, in My unmanifest form, in that form in which My nature is not manifest, i.e. in My form which is beyond the range of the organs.

Sarva-bhutani, all beings, from Brahma to a clump of grass; matsthani, exist in Me, are established in Me in that unmanifest form. For, no created thing that is bereft of the Self (i.e. of Reality) can be conceived of as an object of practical use. Therefore, being possessed of their reality through Me who am their Self, they exist in Me. Hence they are said to be established in Me.

I Myself am the Self of those created things. Consequently, it appears to people of little understanding that I dwell in them. Hence I say: Na ca aham, but I am not; avasthitah, contained; tesu, in them, in the created things. Since unlike gross objects I am not in contact with anything, therefore I am certainly the inmost core even of space. For, a thing that has no contact with anything cannot exist like something contained in a receptacle.

For this very reason that I am not in contact with anything-

5. Nor do the beings dwell in Me. Behold My divine Yoga! I am the sustainer and originator of beings, but My Self is not contained in the beings.

Na ca bhutani, nor do the beings, beginning from Brahma; matsthani, dwell in Me. Pasya, behold; me, My; aisvaram, divine; yogam, Yoga, action, performance, i.e. this real nature of Myself. The Upanisadic text, too, similarly shows the absence of association (of the Self) due to Its being free from contact: '.....unattached, for It is never attached' (Br. 3.9.26). Behold this other wonder: I am the bhuta-bhrt, sustainer of beings, though I am unattached. Ca, but; mama atma, My Self; na bhutasthah, is not contained in the beings. As it has been explained according to the logic stated above, there is no possibility of Its remaining contained in beings. How, again, is it said, 'It is My Self? Following human understanding, having separated the aggregate of body etc. (from the Self) and superimposing egoism of them, the Lord calls It 'My Self'. But not that He has said so by ignorantly thinking like ordinary mortals that the Self is different from Himself.

So also, I am the bhuta-bhavanah, originator of beings, one who gives birth to or nourishes the beings.

By way of establishing with the help of an illustration the subject-matter [Subject-matter-that the Self, which has no contact with anything, is the substratum of creation, continuance and dissolution.] dealt with in the aforesaid two verses, the Lord says:

6. Understand thus that just as the voluminous wind moving everywhere is ever present in space, similarly all beings abide in Me.

Upadharaya, understand; iti, thus; that yatha, just as; in the world, the mahan, voluminous-in dimension; vayuh, wind; sarvatragah, moving everywhere; is nityam, ever; [During creation, continuance and dissolution] akasa-sthitah, present in space; tatha, similarly; (sarvani, all; bhutani, beings; matsthani,) abide in Me who am omnipresent like space-abide certainly without any contact.

7. O son Kunti, all the beings go back at the end of a cycle to My Prakrti. I project them forth again at the beginning of a cycle.

Kaunteya, O son of Kunti; sarva-bhutani, all the beings-all the beings which, like wind abiding in space, abide thus in Me during their period of existence; yanti, go back; kalpa-ksaye, at the end of a cycle, at the time of dissolution; mamikam prakrtim, to My Prakrti which consists of the three gunas (qualities; see 7.13) and is (called My) lower Nature. Punah, again; aham, I; visrjami, project forth, create; tani, them, the beings, as before [As before: as in previous cycles of creation.]; kalpadau, at the beginning of a cycle, at the time of creation.

8. Keeping My own prakrti under control, I project forth again and again the whole of this multitude of beings which are powerless owing to the influence of (their own) nature.

Thus avastabhya, keeping under control; svam, My own; prakrtim, Prakrti, which is characterized as nescience; visrjami, I project forth; punah, punah, again and again; the krtśnam, whole of; imam, this; existing bhūta-gaṁam, multitude of beings which are born of Prakrti; which, being under another's subjugation due to such defects [See under 8.19, introductory Commentary.-Tr.] as ignorance etc., are avasam, powerless, not independent; prakṛteḥ vaśat, under the influence of their own nature.

'In that case, You, who are the supreme God and who ordain this multitude of beings unequally, will become associated with virtue and vice as a result of that act?'

In answer the Lord says this"

9. O Dhananjaya (Arjuna), nor do those actions bind Me, remaining (as I do) like one unconcerned with, and unattached to, those actions.



O Dhananjaya, na ca, nor do; tani, those; karmani, actions-which are the sources of the creation of the multitude of beings unequally; nibadhnanti, bind; mam, Me, who am God. As to that, the Lord states the reason for His not becoming associated with the actions: Asinam, remaining (as I do); udasinavat, like one unconcerned, like some indifferent spectator- for the Self is not subject to any change; and asaktam, unattached; tesu karmasu, to those actions-free from attachment to results, free from the egoism that 'I do.'

Hence, even in the case of any other person also, the absence of the idea of agency and the absence of attachment to results are the causes of not getting bound. Otherwise, like the silkworm, a foolish man becomes bound by actions. This is the idea.

There (in the previous two verses) it involves a contradiction to say, 'Remaining like one unconcerned, I project forth this multitude of beings.' In order to dispel this doubt the Lord says:

10. Under Me as the supervisor, the Prakṛti produces (the world) of the moving and the non-moving things. Owing to this reason, O son of Kuntī, the world revolves.

Maya, under Me; adhyaksena, as the supervisor, remaining changeless as a mere witness under all circumstances; prakrtih, the Prakrti, My maya consisting of the three gunas and characterized as ignorance; suyate, produces; the world sa-cara-acaram. of the moving and the none-moving things. Thus there is the Vedic text, 'The one divine Being is hidden in all beings; He is amnipresent, the indwelling Self of all beings, the Supervisor of actions, the refuge of all beings, the witness, the one who imparts consciousness, unconditioned [This is according to Sankaracarya's commentary on this verse. A.G. interprets kevala as non-dual.-Tr.] and without qualities' (Sv. 6.11).

Anena hetuna, owing to this reason-because of this presiding over; O son of Kunti, the jagat, world, with the moving and the non-moving things, consisting of the manifest and the unmanifest; viparivartate, revolves, under all conditions [During creation, continuance and dissolution.] All the activities of the world in the form, 'I eat this; I see; I hear this; I experience this happiness, suffer this sorrow; I shall do this for that purpose, [Ast. omits this portion.-Tr] I shall do this for this purpose; I shall know this,' etc. indeed arise owing to their being the objects of the conscious witness. They verily exist in consciousness, and end in consciousness. And such mantras as, 'He who is the witness of this is in the supreme heaven' [Supreme heaven, the heart; i.e. He is inscrutable.] (Rg., Na. Su. 10.129.7; Tai. Br.2.8.9), reveal this fact. Since it follows from this that there is no other conscious being part from the one Deity-who is the witness of all as the absolute Consciousness, and who in reality has no contact with any kind of enjoyment-, therefore there is no other enjoyer. Hence, in this context, the question, 'For what purpose is this creation?', and its answer are baseless-in accordance with the Vedic text, 'Who know (It) truly, who can fully speak about this here? From where has this come? From where is this variegated

creation?' (Rg. 3.54.5; 10.129.6). And it has been pointed out by the Lord also: 'Knowledge remains covered by ignorance. Thereby the creatures become deluded' (5.15).

11. Not knowing My supreme nature as the Lord of all beings, foolish people disregard Me who have taken a human body.

Ajanatah, not knowing; mama, My; param, supreme; bhavam, nature-My supreme Reality, which is like space, nay, which is subtler and more pervasive than space; as bhuta-maheswaram, the Lord of all beings, the great Lord of all beings who is their Self; mudhah, foolish people, the non-discriminating ones; avajananti, disregard, belittle; mam, Me, although I am by nature thus eternal, pure, intelligent, free and the Self of all beings; and asritam, who have taken; manusim tanum, a human body common to men, i.e... when I act with the help of a human body. As a result of that, as a result of continuously disrespecting Me, those wretches get ruined.

How?

12. Of vain hopes, of vain actions, of vain knowledge, and senseless, they become verily possessed of the deceptive disposition of fiends and demons.

Moghasah, of vain hopes. So also, mogha-karmanah, of vain actions: their rites, such as Agnihotra etc. which are undertaken by them, verily become vain, fruitless actions, because of dishonouring the Lord, disregarding Him who is their own Self. In this way they are of vain actions.

Similarly, mogha-jnanah, of vain knowledge: of fruitless knowledge; even their knowledge verily becomes useless. And vicetasah, senseless: i.e., they lose their power of discrimination. Besides, [Besides, in the next birth...] they become sritah, possessed of; the mohinim, self-deceptive, self-delusive; prakritim, disposition; raksasim, of fiends; and asurim, of demons-according to which the body is the Self; i.e., they become habitually inclined to act cruelly, saying, 'cut, break, drink, eat, steal others' wealth,' etc. [The habit to cut, break, drink, eat, etc. is characteristic of fiends. The habit of stealing others' wealth, etc. is characteristic of demons.] This is stated in the Sruti, 'Those worlds of devils (are covered by blinding darkness)' (Is. 3).

13. O son of Prtha, the noble ones, being possessed of divine nature, surely adore Me with single-mindedness, knowing Me as the immutable source of all objects.

On the other hand, O son of Prtha, those mahat-manah, noble ones-who are not small-minded, who are imbued with faith, and who have set out on the path of Liberation, which is characterized by devotion to God; being asritah, possessed of; daivim, divine; prakrtim, nature-distinguished by mental and physical control, kindness, faith, etc.; tu, surely; bhajante, adore; mam, Me, God; ananya-manasah, with single-mindedness; jnatva, knowing Me; as the avyayam, immutable; bhutadim, source of all objects, of space etc. (i.e. the five elements) as well as of living beings.

How?

14. Always glorifying Me and striving, the men of firm vows worship Me by paying obeisance to Me and being ever endowed with devotion.

Satatam, always; kirtayantah, glorifying; mam, Me, God, who am Brahman in reality; ca, and; yatantah, striving, endeavouring with the help of such virtues as withdrawal of the organs, control of mind and body, kindness, non-injury, etc.; drdha-vratah, the men of firm vows those whose vows [Vows such as celibacy], those whose vows are unshakable; upasate, worship Me; namasyantah, by paying obeisance; mam, to Me, to the Self residing in the heart, ca, and; nitya-yuktah, being ever endowed; bhaktya, with devotion.

The various ways in which they adore are being stated:

15. Others verily worship Me by adoring exclusively through the sacrifice of the knowledge of oneness; (others worship Me) multifariously, and (others) as the multiformed existing variously.

Anye, others, giving up others forms of adoration; ca, verily; upasate, worship; mam, Me, God; yajantah, by adoring, glorifying; api, exclusively; jnana-yajnene ekatvena, through the sacrifice of the knowledge of oneness-knowledge of God itself being the sacrifice; and that knowledge consists in the realization of the highest truth that the supreme Brahman is verily one. Adoring with that (knowledge) they worship Me.

And some others Me prthaktvena, multifariously-in different forms as the sun, moon, etc. They worship (Me) by thinking that, Visnu who is God Himself exists in different forms as the sun etc.

Still others worship Me thinking that, that very God who is visvatomukhah, multiformed, who has His face everywhere, i.e., who is the Cosmic Person; exists bahudha, variously. In numerous ways they worship Him, the Cosmic Person, who has His face everywhere.

'If they worship in numerous ways, how is it that they worship You alone?'  
Hence the Lord says:

16. I am the kratu, I am the yajna, I am the svadha, I am the ausadha, I am the mantra, I Myself am the ajya, I am the fire, and I am the act of offering.

Aham, I; am the kratuh, a kind of Vedic sacrifice; I Myself am the yajnah, sacrifice as prescribed by the Smrtis; further, I am svadha, the food that is offered to the manes; I am ausadham-by which word is meant the food that is eaten by all creatures. Or, svadha means food in general of all creatures, and ausadha means medicine for curing diseases. I am the mantra with which offering is made to manes and gods. I Myself am the alyam, oblations; and I am agnih, the fire-I Myself am the fire into which the oblation is poured. And I am the hutam, act of offering.

Besides,

17. Of this world I am the father, mother, ordainer, (and the), grand-father; I am the knowable, the sancitifier, the syllable Om as also Rk, Sama and Yajus.

Asya, of this; jagatah, world; aham, I; am pita, the father; mata, the mother; dhata, ordainer, dispenser of the results of their actions to the creatures; (and the) pirtamahah, grand-father. I am the vedayam, knowable-that which has to be known; the pavitram, sanctifier; [Virtuous actions.] and the onkarah, syllable Om; eva ca, as also Rk, Sama and Yajus. [Brahman, which has to be known, is realizable through Om, regarding which fact the three Vedas are the authority. The ca (as also) is suggestive of the Atharva-veda.]

Moreover,

18. (I am) the fruit of actions, the nourisher, the Lord, witness, abode, refuge, friend, origin, end, foundation, store and the imperishable seed.

(I am) the gatih, fruit of actions; the bharta, nourisher; [The giver of the fruits of actions.] the prabhuh, Lord; the saksi, witness of all that is done or not done by creatures; the nivasah, abode, where creatures live; the saranam, refuge, remover of sufferings of the afflicted who take shelter; the suhrt, friend, one who does a good turn without thought of reward; the prabhavah, origin of the world; the pralayah, end, the place into which the world merges. So also, (I am) the sthanam, foundation on which the world rests; the nidhanam, store, which is for future enjoyment of creatures; and the avyayam, imperishable; bijam, seed, the cause of growth of all things which germinate. The seed is imperishable because it continues so long as the world lasts. Indeed, nothing springs up without a seed. And since creation is noticed to be continuous, it is understood that the continuity of the seed never ends.

Further,

19. O Arjuna, I give heat, I withhold and pour down rain. I am verily the nectar, and also death existence and nonexistence.



O Arjuna, aham, I, in the form of the sun; tapami, give heat through some intense rays. Through some rays utsrjami, I pour down; varsam, rain. Having poured down, again nigrhnam, I withdraw it through some rays-for eight months. Again I pour it down in the rainy season. I am eva ca, verily; the amrtam, nectar of the gods; and mrtyuh, death of the mortals. I Myself am sat, existence-the effect which has come into being in relation to its cause; and its opposite, asat, nonexistence. [Nonexistence: the cause which has not become manifest as the effect possessing name and form, It cannot be admitted that the effect has absolute existence, for the Upanisad says, 'All transformation has speech as its basis, and it is name only' (Ch.6. 1. 4). Nor can it be said that the cause has absolute non-existence, for there is the text,'.... by what logic can the existent come verily out of nonexistence? But surely,....all this was Existence, one without a second' (op. cit. 6.2.2).] It is not that the Lord is Himself absolutely nonexistence; nor are effect and cause (absolutely) existence and nonexistent (respectively).

Those men of Knowledge who meditate of Me while worshipping Me according to the respective forms of sacrifices mentioned above-regarding Me as one or multifarious, etc.-, they attain Me alone according to their conceptions.

20. Those who are versed in the Vedas, who are drinkers of Soma and are purified of sin, pray for the heavenly goal by worshipping Me through sacrifices. Having reached the place (world) of the king of gods, which is the result of righteousness, they enjoy in heaven the divine pleasure of gods.

Those, again, who are ignorant and desirous of pleasures, trai-vidyah, who are versed in the three Vedas, who know the Rk, Yajus and Sama Vedas; somapah, who are drinkers of Soma; and who, as a result of that very drinking of Soma, are puta-papah, purified of sin; prarthayante, pray for; the svargatim, heavenly goal, the attainment of heaven-heaven itself being the goal [Ast. adds this portion-svareva gatih, heaven itself being the goal.-Tr.]-; istva, by worshipping; mam, Me, existing in the forms of gods such as the Vasus and others; yajnaih, through sacrifices such as the Agnistoma etc. And asadya, having reached; surendra-lokam, the place (world) of the kind of gods, of Indra; (which is) punyam, the result of righteousness; te, they; asnanti, enjoy; divi, in heaven; the devyan, divine, heavenly, supernatural;; deva-bhogan, pleasures of gods.

21. After having enjoyed that vast heavenly world, they enter into the human world on the exhaustion of their merit. Thus, those who follow the rites and duties prescribed in the three Vedas, and are desirous of pleasures, attain the state of going and returning.

Bhuktvā, after having enjoyed; tam, that: visalam, vast; svargalokam, heavenly world; te, they; visanti, enter into; this martyalokam, human world; ksine, on the exhaustion; of their punye, merit. Evam, thus, indeed; anuprapannah, those who follow in the manner described; trai-dharmyam, [A variant reading is trayi-dharmam.-Tr.] the rites and duties prescribed in the three Vedas-merely the Vedic rites and duties; and are kama-kamah, desirous of pleasures; labhante, attain; only gata-agatam, the state of going and returning, but never that of independence. This is the meaning.

22. Those persons who, becoming non-different from Me and meditative, worship Me everywhere, for them, who are ever attached (to Me), I arrange for securing what they lack and preserving what they have.

On the other hand, ye janah, those persons, the monks, who are desireless and fully illumined; who ananyah, becoming non-different (from Me), having realized the supreme Deity, Narayana, as their own Self; and cintayantah, becoming meditative; ['Having known that I, Vasudeva, am the Self of all, and there is nothing else besides Me'.] paryu-pasate mam, worship Me everywhere; ['They see Me the one, all-pervading, infinite Reality.'] tesam, for them; who have realized the supreme Truth, nitya-abhiyuktanam, who are ever attached (to Me); aham, I; vahami, arrange for; both yoga-kesamam, securing what they lack and preserving what they have. Yoga means making available what one does not have, and ksema means the protection of what one has got.

Since 'but the man of Knowledge is the very Self. (This is) My opinion' and 'he too is dear to Me' (7.17,18), therefore they have become My own Self as also dear. Does not the Lord surely arrange for securing what they lack and protecting what they have even in the case of other devotees? This is true. He does arrange for it. But the difference lies in this: Others who are devotees make their own efforts as well for their own sake, to arrange for securing what they lack and protecting what they have. On the contrary, those who have realized non-duality do not make any effort to arrange for themselves the acquisition of what they do not have and the preservation of what they have. Indeed, they desire nothing for themselves, in life or in death. They have taken refuge only in the Lord. Therefore the Lord Himself arranges to procure what they do not have and protect what they have got.

'If you Yourself are the other gods even, then do not their devotees too worship You alone?' 'Quite so!'

23. Even those who, being devoted to other deities and endowed with faith, worship (them), they also, O son of Kunti, worship Me alone (though) following the wrong method.

Api, even; ye, those who; anya-devata-bhaktah, being devoted to tother deities; and anvitah sraddhaya, endowed with faith; yajante, worship (them), te api, they also; O son of Kunti, yajanti, worship; mam, Me; eva, alone; (though) avidhi-purvakam, following the wrong method. Avidhi implies ignorance. So the idea is that they worship (Me) ignorantly.

'How it is that they worship (Me) ignorantly?' [i.e. the worshippers of other deities worship them knowingly, and hence, how can the question of their ignorance arise?] This is being answered: Because-

24. I indeed am the enjoyer as also the Lord of all sacrifices; but they do not know Me in reality. Therefore they fall.

As the Self of the deities (of the sacrifices), aham, I; hi, indeed; am the bhokta, enjoyer; ca eva, as also; the prabhuh, Lord; [The Lord: 'I being the indwelling Ruler of all.'] sarva-yajnanam, of all sacrifices enjoined by the Vedas and the Smrtis. A sacrifice is verily presided over by Me, for it has been said earlier, 'I Myself am the entity (called Visnu) that exists in the sacrifice in this body' (8.4). Tu, but; na abhi-jananti, they do not know; mam, Me as such; tattvena, in reality. And atah, therefore, by worshipping ignorantly; te, they; cyavanti, fall from the result of the sacrifice. [Although they perform sacrifices with great diligence, still just because they do not know Me real nature and do not offer the fruits of their sacrifices to Me, they proceed to the worlds of the respective deities through the Southern Path (beginning with smoke; see 8.25). Then, after the exhaustion of the results of those sacrifices and the falling of the respective bodies (assumed in those worlds) they return to the human world for rebodiment.'-M.S. (See also 9.20-1.)]

The result of a sacrifice is inevitable even for those who worship ignorantly out of their devotion to other deities. How?

25. Votaries of the gods reach the gods; the votarites of the manes go to the manes; the worshippers of the Beings reach the Beings; and those who worship Me reach Me.

Deva-vratah, votaries of the gods, those whose religious observances [Making offerings and presents, circumambulation, bowing down, etc.] and devotion are directed to the gods; yanti, reach, go to; devan, the gods. Pitr-vratah, the votaries of the manes, those who are occupied with such rites as obsequies etc., who are devoted to the manes; go pitrn, to the manes such as Agnisvatta and others. Bhutejyah, the Beings such as Vinayaka, the group of Sixteen (divine) Mothers, the Four Sisters, and others. And madyajinah, those who worship Me, those who are given to worshipping Me, the devotees of Visnu; reach mam, Me alone. Although the effort (involved) is the same, still owing to ignorance they do not worship Me exclusively. Thereby they attain lesser results. This is the meaning.

'Not only do My devotees get the everlasting result in the form of non-return (to this world), but My worship also is easy.' How?

26. Whoever offers Me with devotion-a leaf, a flower, a fruit, or water, I accept that (gift) of the pure-hearted man which has been devotionally presented.

Yah, whoever; prayaccati, offers; me, Me; bhaktya, with devotion; patram, a leaf; puspam, a flower phalam, a fruit; or toyam, water; asnam, I accept; tat, that (gift)-leaf etc.; prayata-atmanah, of the pure-hearted man; which has been bhakti-upahrtam devotionally presented.

Since this is so, therefore-

27. O son of Kunti, whatever you do, whatever you eat, whatever you offer as a sacrifice, whatever you give and whatever austerities you undertake, (all) that you offer to Me.

O son of Kunti, yat-karosi, whatever you do, what comes spontaneously; [Actions such as walking etc. that are spontaneous, not injunctions of the scriptures.] yad-asnasi, whatever you eat; and yat-juhosi, whatever you offer as a sacrifice, whatever sacrifices you perform-be it prescribed by the Vedas or by the Smrtis; yatadadasi, whatever you give-gold, food, clarified butter, etc. to Brahmanas and others; and yat-tapasyasi, whatever austerities you undertake; (all) tat, that; kurusva madarpanam, you offer to Me.

'Hear what happens to you when you act thus.'

28. Thus, you will become free from bondage in the form of actions which are productive of good and bad results. Having your mind imbued with the yoga of renunciation and becoming free, you will attain Me.

By dedicating to Me evam, thus; maksyase, you will become free; karma-bandhanaih, from bondage in the form of actions-actions themselves being the bonds; subha-asubha-phalaih, which are productive of good and bad results-i.e. from actions that have desirable (subha) and undesirable (asubha) results (phala).

Sannyasa, renunciation, is that which results from dedication (of actions) to Me, and that is also yoga since it involves actions. He who has his mind (atma) endowed (yukta) with that yoga of renunciation (sannyasa-yoga) is sannyasa-yoga-yukta-atma.

You, being such, having your mind endowed with the yoga of renunciation, and vimuktah, becoming free from the bonds of actions even while living; upaisyasi, will attain, come; mam, to Me, when this body falls.

In that case the Lord is possessed of love and hatred inasmuch as He favours the devotees, and not others? That is not so:

29. I am impartial towards all beings; to Me there is none detastable or none dear. But those who worship Me with devotion, they exist in Me, and I too exist in them.



Aham, I; am samah, impartial, equal; sarva-bhutesu, towards all beings; me, to Me; na asti, there is none; dvesyah, detestable; na, none; priyah, dear. I am like fire: As fire does not ward off cold from those who are afar, but removes it from those who approach, near, similarly I favour the devotees, not others. Tu, but; ye, those who approach near, similarly I favour the devotees, not others. Tu, but; ye, those who; bhajanti, worship Me, God; bhaktya, with devotion; te they; exist mayi, in Me-by their very nature; ['Their mind becomes fit for My manifestation, as it has been purified by following the virtuous path.'] they do not exist in Me because of My love, Ca, and; aham, I; api, too; naturally exist tesu, in them, not in others. Thus there is no hatred towards them (the latter).

'Listen to the greatness of devotion to Me:'

30. Even if a man of very bad conduct worships Me with one-pointed devotion, he is to be considered verily good; for he has resolved rightly.

Api cet, even if; su-duracarah, a man of very bad conduct, of extremely vile behaviour, of very condemnable character; bhajate, worships; mam, Me; ananyabhak, with one-pointed devotion, with his mind not given to anybody else; he; mantavyah, is to be considered, deemed; eva, verily; sadhuh, good, as well behaved; hi, for; sah, he; samyakvyavasitah, has resolved rightly, has virtuous intentions.

31. He soon becomes possessed of a virtuous mind; he attains everlasting peace. Do you proclaim boldly, O son of Kunti, that My devotee does not get ruined.

Having given up his external evil behaviour due to the strength of his internal proper resolves, ksipram bhavati, he soon becomes; verily dharma-atma, possessed of a virtuous mind; and nigaccahti, he attains; sasvat, everlasting; santim, peace, quietude [Cessation of evil acts.]. O son of Kunti, listen to the supreme Truth: Pratijanihi, do you proclaim boldly, make a firm declaration; that me, My; bhaktah, devotee, who has dedicated his inner being to Me; na, does not; pranasyati, get ruined.

Moreover,

32. For, O son of Prtha, even those who are born of sin-women, Vaisyas, as also Sudras [S.'s construction of this portion is: women, Vaisyas as also Sudras, and even others who are born of sin (i.e., those who are born low and are of vile deeds, viz Mlecchas, Pukkakas and others). M.S. also takes papa-yonayah (born of sin) as a separate phrase, and classifies women and others only as those debarred from Vedic study, etc.-Tr.], even they reach the highest Goal by taking shelter under Me.

Hi, for; O son of Prtha, ye api, even those; papayonayah syuh, who are born of sin;-as to who they are, the Lord says-striyah, women; vaisyah, Vaisyas, tatha, as also; sudrah, Sudras; te api, even they; yanti, reach, go to; the param, highest; gatim, Goal vyapasritya, by taking shelter; mam, under Me- by accepting Me as their refuge.

33. What to speak of the holy Brahmanas as also of devout kind-sages! Having come to this ephemeral and miserable world, do you worship Me.

Kim punah, what to speak of; the punyah brahmanah, holy Bramanas, of sacred birth; tatha, as also; of the bhaktah, devout; rajarsayah, kind-sages- those who are kings and, at the same time, sages! Since this is so, therefore, prapya, having come; imam, to this; anityam, ephemeral, ever changeful; and asukham, miserable, unhappy; lokam, world, the human world-having attained this human life which is a means to Liberation; bhajasva, do you worship, devoted yourself; mam to Me.

How?

34. Having your mind fixed on Me, be devoted to Me, sacrifice to Me, and bow down to Me. By concentrating your mind and accepting Me as the supreme Goal, you shall surely attain Me who am thus the Self.

Manmana bhava, have your mind fixed on Me; [Here Ast. adds the word vasudeva.-Tr] and also be madbhakah, devoted to Me. Madyaji, sacrifice to Me, be engaged in sacrificing to Me. And namaskuru, bow down; only mam, to Me. Yuktva, by concentrating your mind; and mat-parayanah, by accepting Me as the supreme Goal; esyasi eva, you shall surely attain; mam, Me who am God. You shall attain Me evam atmanam, who am thus the Self: I indeed am the Self of all the beings, and am also the supreme Goal. You shall attain Me who am such. In this way, the word atmanam (Self) is to be connected with the preceding word mam (Me). This is the purport.

## Chapter 10 - Vibhuti Yoga

Commentary by Sri Adi Sankaracharya, Translated by Swami Gambhirananda

In the seventh chapter, as also in the ninth, have been revealed the reality [Reality both immanent and transcendent.] and the glories [Glory: the aids to the realization of the qualified and the unqualified aspects of God.] of the Lord. Thereafter, now have to be presented those manifestations through which the Lord is to be meditated on. And the reality of the Lord also, though spoken of earlier, has to be repeated because of its inscrutability. Hence-

### The Blessed Lord said:

1. O mighty-armed one, listen over again of My supreme utterance, which I, wishing your welfare, shall speak to you who take delight (in it).

O mighty-armed one, srnu, listen; bhuyah eva, over again; me, to My; paramam, supreme; vacah, utterance, which is expressive of the transcendental Reality; yat, which supreme Truth; aham, I; vaksyami, shall speak; te, to you; priyamanaya, who take delight (in it). You become greatly pleased by My utterance, like one drinking ambrosia. Hence, I shall speak to you hita-kamyaya, wishing your welfare.

'Why shall I speak?' In answer to this the Lord says:

2. Neither the gods nor the great sages know My majesty. For, in all respects, I am the source of the gods and the great sages.

Na sura-sanah, neither the gods-Brahma and others; viduh, know;-what do they not know?-me, My; prabhavam (prabhavam), majesty, abundance of lordly power-or, derived in the sense of 'coming into being', it means origin. Nor even the maharsayah, great sages, Bhrgu and others [Bhrgu, Marici, Atri, Pulastya, Pulaha, Kratu and Vasistha.-Tr.] devanam, of the gods; ca, and; maharsinam, of the great sages.

Besides,

3. He who knows Me-the birthless, the beginningless, and the great Lord of the worlds, he, the undeluded one among mortals, becomes freed from all sins.

Yah, he who; vetti, knows; mam, Me; ajam, the birthless; and anadim, the beginningless: Since I am the source of the gods and the great sages, and nothing else exists as My origin, therefore I am birthless and beginningless. Being without an origin is the cause of being birthless. He who knows Me who am thus birthless and beginningless, and loka-maheswaram, the great Lord of the worlds, the transcendental One devoid of ignorance and its effects; sah, he; the asammudhah, undeluded one; martyesu, among mortals, among human beings; pramucyate, becomes freed; sarva-papaih, from all sins-committed knowingly or unknowingly.

'For the following reason also I am the great Lord of the worlds:'

4. Intelligence, wisdom, non-delusion, forgiveness, truth, control of the external organs, control of the internal organs, happiness, sorrow, birth, death and fear as also fearlessness;

5. Non-injury, equanimity, satisfaction, austerity, charity, fame, infamy-(these) different dispositions of beings spring from Me alone.

Buddhih, intelligence-the power of the internal organ to know of things which are subtle etc. Indeed, people talk of a man possessed of this (power) as intelligent. Jnanam, wisdom-knowledge of entities such as the Self etc. Asammohah, non-delusion-proceeding with discrimination with regard to things that are to be known as they present them-selves. Ksama, forgiveness-unperturbability of the mind of one who is abused or assulted. Satyam, truth-an utterance regarding what one has seen, heard, and felt oneself, communicated as such to others for their understanding, is said to be truth. Damah, control of the external organs. Samah, control of the internal organs. Sukham, happiness. Duhkham, sorrow. Bhavah, birth; and its opposite abhavah, death. And bhayam, fear; as also its opposite abhayam, fearlessness. Ahimsa, non-injury-non-cruely towards creatures. Samata, equanimity. Tustih, satisfaction-the idea of sufficiency with regard to things acquired. Tapah, austerity-disciplining the body through control of the organs. Danam, charity-distribution (of wealth) according to one's capacity. Yasah, fame-renown arising from righteousness. On the contrary, ayasah is infamy due to unrighteousness. (These) prthak-vidhah, different; bhavah, dispositions-intelligence etc. as described; bhuanam, of beings, of living beings. bhavanti, spring; mattah, eva, from Me alone, [This is said in the sense that none of these dispositions can exist without the Self.] from God, in accordanced with their actions.

Moreover,

6. The seven great sages as also the four Manus of ancient days, of whom are these creatures in the world, had their thoughts fixed on Me, and they were born from My mind.

Sapta, the seven; maharsayah, great sages-Bhrgu and others; tatha, as also; catvarah, the four; manavah, Manus [Savarni, Dharma-savarini, Daksa-savarni, and Savarna.-Tr.]- well known as Savarnas; purve, of ancient days; yesam, of whom, of which Manus and the great sages; imah, these; prajah, creatures, moving and non-moving; loke in the world, are the creation; madbhavah, had their thoughts fixed on Me-they had their minds fixed on Me, (and hence) they were endowed with the power of Visnu; and they jatah, were born; manasa; from My mind-they were created by Me through My mind itself.

7. One who knows truly this majesty and yoga of Mine, he becomes imbued with unwavering Yoga. There is no doubt about this.

Yah, one who; vetti, knows; tattvatah, truly, i.e. just as it is; etam, this, aforesaid; vibhutim. majesty, (divine) manifestations; [Omnipresence.] and yogam, yoga, action, My own ability to achieve [God's omnipotence. (God's power of accomplishing the impossible.-M.S.)]-or, the capacity for mystic powers, the omniscience resulting from yoga (meditation), is called yoga; sah, he; yujyate, becomes imbued with; avikampena, unwavering; yogena, Yoga, consisting in steadfastness in perfect knowledge. [After realizing the personal God, he attains the transcendental Reality; the earlier knowledge leads to the latter.]

There is no samsayah, doubt; atra, about this.

With what kind of unwavering Yoga does he become endued? This is being answered:

8. I am the origin of all; everything moves on owing to Me. Realizing thus, the wise ones, filled with fervour, adore Me.

Aham, I, the supreme Brahman called Vasudeva; am the prabhavah, origin; sarvasya, of all, of the whole world; sarvam, everything, the whole world of changes, consisting of continuance, destruction, action and enjoyment of the fruits of action; pravartate, moves on; mattah, owing to Me alone. Matva, realizing; iti, thus; the budhah, wise ones, the knowers of the supreme Reality; bhava-samanvitah, filled with fervour-bhava is the same as bhavana, meaning ardent longing for the supreme Reality; filled (samanvitah) with that, i.e. imbued with that; bhajante, adore; mam, Me.

Besides,

9. With minds fixed on Me, with lives dedicated to Me, enlightening each other, and always speaking of Me, they derive satisfaction and rejoice.

Maccittah, with minds fixed on Me; mad-gata-pranah, with lives (pranas) dedicated to Me, or having their organs, eyes etc. absorbed in Me, i.e. having their organs withdrawn into Me; bodhayantah, enlightening; parasparam, each other; and nityam, always; kathayantah, speaking of; mam, Me, as possessed of qualities like knowledge, strength, valour, etc; tusyanti, they derive satisfaction; and ramanti, rejoice, get happiness, as by coming in contact with a dear one.

10. To them who are ever devoted and worship Me with love, I grant that possession of wisdom by which they reach Me.



Tesam, to them, who, becoming devotees, adore Me in the manner described earlier; satata-yuktanam, who are ever devoted, ever attached, who have become free from all external desires; and bhajatam, who worship-. Is it because of hankering for possessions? The Lord says: No, (they worship) priti-purvakam, with love. To them who worship Me with that (love), dadami, I grant; tam, that; buddhi-yogam, possession of wisdom- buddhi means full enlightenment with regard to My real nature; coming in possession (yoga) of that is buddhi-yoga; yena, by which possession of wisdom consisting in full enlightenment; upayanti, they reach, realize as their own Self; mam, Me, the supreme God who is the Self. Who do so? Te, they, who adore Me through such disciplines as fixing their minds on Me, etc.

'For what purpose, or as the destroyer of what cause standing as an obstacle on the way of reaching You, do You bestow that possession of wisdom to those devotees of Yours?'

In reply to such a query the Lord says:

11. Out of compassion for them alone, I, residing in their hearts, destroy the darkness born of ignorance with the luminous lamp of Knowledge.

Anukampartham, out of compassion; tesam eva, for them alone, anxious as to how they may have bliss; aham, I; atmabhavasthah, residing in their hearts-atmabhavah means the seat that is the heart; being seated there itself; nasayami, destroy; tamah, the darkness; ajnanajam, born of ignorance, originating from non-discrimination, the darkness of delusion known as false comprehension; jnana-dipena, with the lamp of Knowledge, in the form of discriminating comprehension; i.e. bhasvata, with the luminous lamp of Knowledge-fed by the oil of divine grace resulting from devotion, fanned by the wind of intensity of meditation on Me, having the wick of the intellect imbued with the impressions arising from such disciplines as celibacy etc., in the receptacle of the detached mind, placed in the windless shelter of the mind withdrawn from objects and untainted by likes and dislikes, and made luminous by full illumination resulting from the practice of constant concentration and meditation.

After hearing the above-described majesty and yoga of the Lord,

***Arjuna said:***

12-13. You are the supreme Brahman, the supreme Light, the supreme Sanctifier. All the sages as also the divine sage Narada, Asita, Devala and Vyasa [Although Narada and the other sages are already mentioned by the words 'all the sages', still they are named separately because of their eminence. Asita is the father of Devala.] call You the eternal divine Person, the Primal God, the Birthless, the Omnipresent; and You Yourself verily tell me (so).

Bhavan, You; are the param brahma, supreme Brahman, the supreme Self; the param dhama, supreme Light; the paramam pavitram, supreme Sanctifier. Sarve, all; rsayah, the sages-Vasistha and others; tatha, as also; the devarisih, divine sage; naradah, Narada; Asita and Devala ahuh, call; tvam, You; thus: Sasvatam, the eternal; divyam, divine; purusam, Person; adidevam, the Primal God, the God who preceded all the gods; ajam, the birthless; vibhum, the Omnipresent-capable of assuming diverse forms. And even Vyasa also speaks in this very way. Ca, and; svayam, You Yourself; eva, verily; bravisi, tell; me, me (so).

14. O Kesava, I accept to be true all this which You tell me. Certainly, O Lord, neither the gods nor the demons comprehend Your glory.

O Kesava, manye, I accept; to be rtam, true indeed; sarvam, all; etat, this that has been said by sages and You; yat, which; vadasi, You tell, speak; mam, to Me. Hi, certainly; bhagavan, O Lord; na devah, neither the gods; na danavah, nor the demons; viduh, comprehend; te, Your; vyaktim, glory [Prabhavam in the Commentary is the same as prabhavam, glory, the unqualified State].

Since You are the origin of the gods and others, therefore,

15. O supreme Person, the Creator of beings, the Lord of beings, God of gods, the Lord of the worlds, You Yourself alone know Yourself by Yourself.

Purusottama, O supreme Person; bhuta-bhavana, O Creator of beings, one who brings the creatures into being; bhutesa, the Lord of beings; deva-deva, O God of gods; jagat-pate, the Lord of the worlds; tvam, You; svayam, Yourself; eva, alone; vettha, know; atmanam, Yourself, as God possessed of unsurpassable powers of knowledge, sovereignty, strength, etc.; atmana, by Yourself.

16. Be pleased to speak in full of Your own manifestations which are indeed divine, through which manifestations You exist pervading these worlds.

Arhasi, be pleased; vaktum, to speak; asesena, in full; atmavibhutayah, of Your own manifestations; divyah hi, which are indeed divine; yabhih, through which; vibhutibhih, manifestations, manifestations of Your glory; tisthasi, You exist; vyapya, pervading; iman, these; lokan, worlds.

17. O Yogi, [Here yoga stands for the results of yoga, viz omniscience, omnipotence, etc.; one possessed of these is a yogi. (See Comm. on 10.7)] how shall I know You by remaining ever-engaged in meditation? And through what objects, O Lord, are You to be meditated on by me?

O Yogi, katham, how; aham vidyam, shall I know tvam, You; sada paricintayan, by remaining ever-engaged in meditation? Ca, and; kesu kesu bhavesu, through what objects; bhagvan, O Lord; cintah asi, are You to be meditated on; maya, by me?

18. O Janardana, narrate to me again [In addition to what has been said in the seventh and ninth chapters.] Your own yoga and (divine) manifestations elaborately. For, while hearing (Your) nectar-like (words), there is no satiety in me.

O Janardana: ardana is derived from ard, in the sense of the act of going; by virtue of making the janas, the demons who are opposed to the gods, go to hell etc. He is called Jana-ardana. Or, He is called so because He is prayed to [The verbal root ard has got a second meaning, 'to pray'.] by all beings for the sake of human goals, viz prosperity and Liberation.

Kathaya, narrate to me; bhuyah, again, though spoken of earlier; atmanah, Your own; yogam, yoga-the special ability in the form of mystic powers; and vibhutam, the (divine) manifestations-the variety of the objects of meditation; vistarena, elaborately. Hi, for; srnvatah, while hearing; (Your) amrtam, nectar-like speech issuing out of Your mouth; na asti, there is no; trptih, satiety; me, in me.

***The Blessed Lord said:***

19. O best of the Kurus, now, according to their importance, I shall described to you My onw glories, which are indeed divine. There is no end to my manifestations.

Kuru-srestha, O best of the Kurus; hanta, now; since, on the other hand, it is not possible to speak exhaustively of them even in a hundred years, (therefore) pradhanyatah, according to their importance, according as those manifestations are pre-eminent in their respective spheres; kathayisyami, I shall described; te, to you; atma-vibhutayah, My own glories; which are (hi, indeed) divyah, divine, heavenly. Na asti there is no; antah, end; me, to My; vistarasya, manifestations.

'Of those, now listen to the foremost:'

20. O Gudakesa, I am the Self residing in the hearts of all beings, and I am the beginning and the middle as also the end of (all) beings.

Gudakesa, O Gudakesa-gudaka means sleep, and isa means master; master of that (sleep) is gudakesa, i.e. one who has conquered sleep; [See also under 1.24.-Tr.] or, one who has got thick hair; aham, I; am the atma, Self, the indwelling Self; who is to be ever-meditated on as sarva-bhuta-asaya [Asaya-that in which are contained the impressions of meditations (upasanas), actions and past experiences.]-sthitah, residing in the hearts of all beings. And, by one who is unable to do so, I am to be meditated on through the following aspects. I am capable of being meditated on (through them) because aham, I; am verily the adih, beginning, the origin; and the madhyam, middle, continuance; ca, as also; the antah, end, dissolution; bhutanam, of (all) beings.

'I am to be meditated upon thus also:'

21. Among the Adityas [viz Dhata, Mitra, aryama, Rudra, Varuna, Surya, Bhaga, Vivasvan, Pusa, Savita, Tvasta and Visnu.-Tr.] I am Visnu; among the luminaries, the radiant sun; among the (forty-nine) Maruts [The seven groups of Maruts are Avaha, Pravaha, Vivaha, Paravaha, Udvaha, Samvaha and parivaha.-Tr.] I am Marici; among the stars I am the moon.

Adityanam, among the twelve Adityas; aham, I; am the Aditya called Visnu. Jyotisam, among the luminaries; amsuman, the radiant; ravih, sun. Marutam, among the different gods called Maruts; asmi, I am; the one called Marici. Naksatranam, among the stars; I am sasi, the moon.

22. Among the Vedas I am Sama-veda; among the gods I am Indra. Among the organs I am the mind, and I am the intelligence in creatures.

Vedanam, among the Vedas; I am the Sama-veda. Devanam, among the gods-such as Rudras, Adityas and others; I am vasavah, Indra. Indriyanam, among the eleven organs, viz eye etc.; I am the manah, mind. I am the mind which is of the nature of reflection and doubt. And I am the cetana, intelligence [It is the medium for the manifestation of Consciousness.], the function of the intellect ever manifest in the aggregate of body and organs; bhtanam, in creatures.

23. Among the Rudras [Aja, Ekapada, Ahirbudhnya, Pinaki, Aparajita, Tryam-baka, Mahesvara, Vrsakapi, Sambhu, Harana and Isvara. Different Puranas give different lists of eleven names.-Tr.] I am Sankara, and among the Yaksas and goblins I am Kubera [God of wealth. Yaksas are a class of demigods who attend on him and guard his wealth.]. Among the Vasus [According to the V.P. they are: Apa, dhruva, Soma, Dharma, Anila, Anala (Fire), Pratyusa and Prabhasa. The Mbh. and the Bh. given a different list.-Tr.] I am Fire, and among the mountains I am Meru.

Rudranam, among the eleven Rudras, I am Sankara; and yaksaraksasam, among the Yaksas and goblins; I am vitesah, Kubera. Vasunam, among the eight Vasus; I am pavakah, Fire; and sikharinam, among the peaked mountains, I am Meru.

24. O son of Prtha, know me to be Brhaspati, the foremost among the priests of kings. Among commanders of armies I am Skanda; among large expanses of water I am the sea.

O son of Prtha viddhi, know; mam, Me; to be Brahaspati, mukhyam, the foremost; purodhasam, among the priests of kings. Being as he is the priest of Indra, he should be the foremost. Senaninam, among commanders of armies; I am Skanda, the commander of the armies of gods. Sarasam, among large expanses of water, among reservoirs dug by gods (i.e. among nature reservoirs); I am sagarah, the sea.

25. Among the great sages I am Bhrgu; of words I am the single syllable (Om) [Om is the best because it is the name as well as the symbol of Brahman.]. Among rituals I am the ritual of Japa [Japa, muttering prayers-repeating passages from the Vedas, silently repeating names of deities, etc. Rituals often involve killing of animals. But Japa is free from such injury, and hence the best.] of the immovables, the Himalaya.

Maharsinam, among the great sages, I am Bhrgu, Giram, of words, of utterances, in the form of words; I am the ekam, single; aksaram, syllable Om. Yajnanam, among rituals; I am the japa-yajnah, rituals of Japa. Sthavaranam, of the immovables, I am the Himalaya.

26. Among all trees (I am) the Asvatha (peepul), and Narada among the divine sages. Among the dandharvas [A class of demigods regarded as the musicians of gods.] (I am) Citraratha; among the perfected ones, the sage Kapila.

Sarva-vrksanam, among all trees, (I am) the Asvatta; and Narada devarsinam, among the divine sages-those who were gods and became sages by virtue of visualizing Vedic mantras; among them I am Narada. Gandharvanam, among the gandharvas, I am the gandharva called Citraratha. Siddhanam, among the perfected ones, among those who, from their very birth, were endowed with an abundance of the wealth of virtue, knowledge and renunciation; (I am) munih, the sage Kapila.

27. Among horses, know Me to be Uccaihsravas, born of nectar; Airavata among the lordly elephants; and among men, the Kind of men. [Uccaihsravas and Airavata are respectively the divine horse and elephant of Indra.]

Asvanam, among horses; viddhi, know; mam, Me; to be the horse named Uccaihsravas; amrta-udbhavam, born of nectar-born when (the sea was) churned (by the gods) for nectar. Airavata, the son of Iravati, gajendranam, among the Lordly elephants; 'know Me to be so' remains understood. And naranam, among men; know Me as the naradhipam, King of men.



28. Among weapons I am the thunderbolt; among cows I am kamadhenu. I am Kandarpa, the Progenitor, and among serpents I am Vasuki.

Ayudhanam, among weapons; I am the vajram, thunderbolt, made of the bones of (the sage) Dadhici. Dhenunam, among milch cows; I am kamadhuk, Kamadhenu, which was the yielder of all desires of (the sage) Vasistha; or it means a cow in general which gives milk at all times. I am Kandarpa, prajana, the Progenitor, (the god) Kama (Cupid). Sarpanam, among serpents, among the various serpents, I am Vasuki, the kind of serpents.

29. Among snakes I am Ananta, and Varuna among gods of the waters. Among the manes I am Aryama, and among the maintainers of law and order I am Yama (King of death).

Naganam, among snakes, of a particular species of snakes; asmi, I am Ananta, the King of snakes. And Varuna, the King yadasam, of the gods of the waters. Pitnam, among the manes; I am the King of the manes, named Aryama. And samyamata, among the maintainers of law and order I am Yama.

30. Among demons I am Prahlada, and I am Time among reckoners of time. And among animals I am the loin, and among birds I am Garuda.

Daityanam, among demons, the descendants of Diti, I am the one called Prahlada. And I am kalah, Time; kalayatam, among reckoners of time, of those who calculate. And mrganam, among animals; I am mrgendrah, the loin, or the tiger. And paksinam, among birds; (I am) vainateyah, Garuda, the son of Vinata.

31. Of the purifiers I am air; among the wielders of weapons I am Rama. Among fishes, too, I am the shark; I am Ganga among rivers.

Pavatam, of the purifiers; I am pavanah, air. Sastra-bhrtam, among wielders of weapons, I am Rama, son of Dasaratha. Jhasanam, among fishes etc; I am the particular species of fish called makarah shark. I am jahnvi, Ganga; srotasam, among rivers, among streams of water.

32. O Arjuna, of creations I am the beginning and the end as also the middle, I am the knowledge of the Self among knowledge; of those who debate I am vada.

O Arjuna sarganam, of creations; I am the adih, beginning; ca, and ; he antah, end; ca eva, as also; the madhyam, middle-I am the origin, continuance and dissolution. At the commencement (verse 20) origin, end, etc. only of things possessed of souls were spoken of, but here the mention is of all creations in general. This is the difference. Vidyanam, among knowledges; I am the adhyatma-vidya, knowledge of the Self, it being the foremost because of its leading to liberation. Pravadatam, of those who debate; aham, I; am vadah, Vada, which is preeminent since it is a means to determining true purport. Hence I am that . By the word pravadatam are here meant the different kinds of debate held by debators, viz Vada, Jalpa, and Vitanda. [Vada: discussion with open-mindedness, with a view to determining true purport; jalpa: pointless debate; Vitanda: wrangling discussion. [Jalpa is that mode of debate by which both parties establish their own viewpoint through direct and indirect proofs, and refute the view of the opponent through circumvention (Chala) and false generalization (Jati) and by pointing out unfitness (of the opponent) to be argued with (Nigraha-sthana). But where one party establishes his viewpoint, and the other refutes it through circumvention, false generalization and showing the unfitness of the opponent to be argued with, without establishing his own views, that is termed Vitanda. Jalpa and Vitanda result only in a trial of strength between the opponents, who are both desirous of victory, But the result of Vada is the ascertainment of truth between the teacher and the disciple or between others, both unbiased.-Gloss of Sridhara Swami on this verse.]-Tr.]

33. Of the letters I am the letter a, and of the group of compound words I am (the compound called) Dvandva. [Dvandva: A compound of two or more words which, if not compounded, would stand in the same case and be connected by the conjunction 'and'.-Tr.] I Mayself am the infinite time; I am the Dispenser with faces everywhere.

Aksaranam, of the letters; I am the akarah, letter a. Samasikasya, of the group of compound words, I am the compund (called) Dvandva. Besieds, aham eva, I Myself; am the aksayah, infinite, endless; kalah, time, well known as 'moment' etc.; or, I am the supreme God who is Kala (Time, the measurer) even of time. I am the dhata, Dispenser, the dispenser of the fruits of actions of the whole world; visvatomukhah, with faces everywhere.

34. And I am Death, the destroyer of all; and the prosperity of those destined to be prosperous. Of the feminine [Narinam may mean 'of the feminine qualities'. According to Sridhara Swami and S., the words fame etc. signify the goddesses of the respective qualities. According to M.S. these seven goddesses are the wives of the god Dharma.-Tr.] (I am) fame, beauty, speech, memory, intelligence, fortitude and forbearance.

Death which is of two kinds-one destroying wealth, and the other destroying life-, [Here Ast. adds: tatra yah prana-harah sah (sarva-harah ucyate)-Among them, that which destroys life (is called sarva-harah).-Tr.] is called sarva-harah, the destroyer of all. I am that. This is the meaning. Or, the supreme God is the all-destroyer because He destroys everything during dissolution. I am He. And I am udbhavah, prosperity, eminence, and the means to it. Of whom? Bhavisyatam, of those destined to be prosperous, i.e. of those who are fit for attaining eminence.

Narinam, of the feminine qualities; I am kirtih, fame; srih, beauty; vak, speech; smrtih, memory; medha, intelligence dhrtih, fortitude; and ksama, forbearance. I am these excellent feminine qualities, by coming to possess even a trace of which one considers himself successful.

35. I am also the Brhat-sama of the Sama (-mantras); of the metres, Gayatri. Of the months I am Marga-sirsa, and of the seasons, spring.

I am tatha, also; the Brhat-sama, the foremost samnam, of the Sama-mantras. Chandasam, of the metres, of the Rk-mantras having the metres Gayatri etc.; I am the Rk called Gayatri. This is meaning. Masanam, of the months, I am Marga-sirsa (Agrahayana, November-December). Rtunam, of the seasons; kusumakarah, spring.

36. Of the fraudulent I am the gambling; I am the irresistible command of the mighty. I am excellene, I am effort, I am the sattva quality of those possessed of sattva.

Chalayatham, of the fraudulent, of the deceitful; I am the dyutam, gambling, such as playing with dice. I am the tejah, irresistible command; tejasvinam, of the mighty. [Some translate this as 'the splendour of the splendid'.-Tr.] I am the jayah, excellence of the excellent. [Some translate this as 'the victory of the victorious'.-Tr.] I am the vyavasayah, effort of the persevering. I am the sattvam, sattva quality; [The result of sattva, viz virtue, knowledge, detachment, etc.] sattvavatam, of those possessed of sattva.

37. Of the vrsnis [The clan to which Sri krsna belonged, known otherwise as the Yadavas.] I am Vasudeva; of the Pandavas, Dhananjaya (Arjuna). And of the wise, I am Vyasa; of the omniscient, the omniscient Usanas.

Vrsninam, of the Vrsnis, [Here Ast. adds yadavanam, of the Yadavas.-Tr.] I am Vasudeva- I who am this person, your friend. Pandavanam, of the Pandavas, (I am) Dhananjaya, you yourself. Api, and; muninam, of the wise, of the thoughtful, of those who know of all things, I am Vyasa. kavinam, of the omniscient (i.e. of the those who know the past, present and future), I am the omniscient Usanas (Sukracarya).

38. Of the punishers I am the rod; I am the righteous policy of those who desire to conquer. And of things secret, I am verily silence; I am knowledge of the men of knowledge..

Damayatham, of the punishers; I am dandah, the rod, which is the means of controlling the lawless. I am the nitih, righteous policy; jagisatam, of those who desire to conquer. And guhyanam, of things secret; I am verily maunam, silence. I am jnanam, knowledge; jnanavatam, of the men of knowledge.

39. Moreover, O Arjuna, whatsoever is the seed of all beings, that I am. There is no thing moving or non-moving which can exist without Me.

Ca, moreover; O Arjuna, yat api, whatsoever; is the bijam, seed, the source of growth ; sarva-bhutanam, of all beings; tat, that I am. As a conclusion of the topic the Lord states in brief His divine manifestations: Na tat asti bhutam, there is no thing; cara-acaram, moving or non-moving; yat, which; syat, can exist; vina maya, without Me. For whatever is rejected by Me, from whatever I withdraw Myself will have no substance, and will become a non-entity. Hence the meaning is that everything has Me as its essence.

40. O destroyer of enemies, there is no limit to My divine manifestations. This description of (My) manifestations, however, has been stated by Me by way illustration.

Parantapa, O destroyer of enemies; asti, there is; na, no; antah, limit; to mama, My; divyanam, divine; vibhutinam, manifestations. Indeed, it is not possible for anyone to speak or know of the limit of the divine manifestations of the of the all-pervading God. Esah, this; vistarah, description; vibhuteh, of (My) manifestations; tu, however; prokatah, has been stated; maya, by Me; uddesatah, by way of illustration, partially.

41. Whatever object [All living beings] is verily endowed with majesty, possessed of prosperity, or is energetic, you know for certain each of them as having a part of My power as its source.

Yat yat, whatever; sattvam, object in the world; is eva, verily; vibhutimat, endowed with majesty; srīmad, possessed of prosperity; va, or; is urjitam, energetic, possessed of vigour; tvam, you; avagaccha, know; eva, for certain; tat tat, each of them; as mama tejomsa-sambhavam, having a part (amsa) of My (mama), of God's, power (teja) as its source (sambhavam).

42. Or, on the other hand, what is the need of your knowing this extensively, O Arjuna? I remain sustaining this whole creation in a special way with a part (of Myself).

Athava, or, on the other hand; kim, what is the need; of tava jnatena, your knowing; etena bahuna, this extensively-but incompletely-in the above manner, O Arjuna? You listen to this subject that is going to be stated in its fullness: Aham, I; sthitah, remain; vīstabhya, sustaining, supporting, holding firmly, in a special way; idam, this; kṛtsnam, whole; jagat, creation; ekamsena, by a part, by a foot [The Universe is called a foot of His by virtue of His having the limiting adjunct of being its efficient and material cause.] (of Myself), i.e. as the Self of all things [As the material and the efficient cause of all things]. The Vedic text, 'All beings form a foot of His' (Rg., Pu. Su. 10.90.3; Tai. Ar. 3.12.3) support this. [A Form constituted by the whole of creation has been presented in this chapter for meditation. Thereby the unqualified transcendental Reality, implied by the word tat (in tattva-masi) and referred to by the latter portion of the Commentator's quotation (viz tripadasyamrtam divi: The immortal three-footed One is established in His own effulgence), becomes established.]